

MR. BENTLEY:

OR, THE

RURAL PHILOSOPHER.

A T A L E.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

D U B L I N:

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Mr. BENTLEY.

C H A P. I.

IN a small Welch village, delightfully situated, near *Carmarthen*, undebauched by the maxims of polished life, the rude barbarity of courts, the pride of cloisters, or the artifice of trade, lived a plain son of simplicity, educated in the school of nature, whom we shall beg leave to introduce to the reader under the name of BENTLEY. He was happily possessed of a large benevolent, humble heart; a quick susceptible understanding. He dedicated his genius to the service of his fellow creatures; he said heaven would reward him for it. He was used to say the shadows of seventy years were brief shadows; and that too much attention was paid, in great cities, to time—too little to eternity. That one general pursuit of temporal interest engaged the prince and the peasant, the mechanic and the merchant. That large societies were knit together by unsocial chains; and that very few were actuated by these nobler principles, the love of God, and the love of man. I

VOL. I.

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will quit, said he, (when a youth, and engaged in all the perplexities of the exchange) I will quit this strange scene the first hour I am able: I will cultivate my heart in the shade, and listen to the vicegerent of heaven, and shut my eyes for ever on the vanities of pleasure, the cares of avarice, and pride of station, and walk home to the house appointed for all living by the silent path, the better way. Accordingly he retired, in mature life, to a small freehold which fell to him by the death of a distant relation, and there executed his purposes of wisdom. There he worshipped with an ardent heart, when the lark sung her first song, and when the shepherd rested him in the noon-tide shadows, and when the star of evening prevailed. Here he could smile in mid-night thunder, and say to his soul, as the first Great Cause to the warring elements, *Peace, be still*. A large grove of flourishing elms surrounded his thatch, where many a croaking generation of clamorous rooks had flourished and passed away. A small river, well supplied with fish, watered his violets at the bottom of the garden. A few small acres, well cultivated, furnished his little family, which consisted of a darling son, and a dear daughter, (having lost his wife some years before) with the *necessaries* of life; and I have known him so ignorant as to insist, that nature asked no more. The situation of the country about him was particularly charming to his warm romantic imagination. The distant prospect of hanging hills, flourishing woods, and laughing vallies, he would call the Deity in capitals; and say to his children, "It looks, my dears, as if in some good distant
" day,

" day, some minister of grace descended on this " sweet spot on an errand of mercy, and left his " blessing for its charter." He wore a plain coat, because he thought dress no great recommendation of the man; and preferred a plain dish, because he thought health a blessing. He was confident on the surest prospect, and merry on the gravest grounds. His religion is summed up in a few words. He fixt his eye stedfastly on the cross at Cavalry, as the man of Tarfus did before him; and walked with jealous feet, and made no merit of obedience.

These are some few of the outlines of a character with which our reader will grow better acquainted as he goes along. Some particular circumstances of his way of life may come better, perhaps, from himself, and with these we shall grow intimate in some of the following chapters.

C H A P. II.

IF Mr. *Bentley* was happy in himself, his family, his situation, he was much more so in the friendship of a worthy man, who had loved him from the first knowledge of his virtues. Mr. *Fairfield* had been very early in life trained to a counting-house, by an uncle, a merchant of property; and, as their situations were somewhat similar, soon contracted a particular faithful friendship with young *Bentley*; he admired the singularity of his grave reasoning turn, and though the gaiety of his disposition did not at that time permit him to profit altogether by the maxims of his young friend, yet he always paid a superior respect for the propriety of his opinions; and always was happy to make a man of chaste humour, and well corrected wit, the director of his parties of pleasure. With *Fairfield*, Mr. *Bentley* was his tutor, his philosopher, his friend; and with the other, the epithet preferred, was my dear brother, my better genius. Thus united by warm sentiments of a liberal attachment, a friendship began in youth, ripened into manhood, and though the flame might be more tempered, it burnt as pure at forty as at fourteen. The difference of fortune, which Mr. *Fairfield* experienced by the death of his uncle, made no difference in his disposition, he still loved and revered the independant man of inferior situation, and *Bentley*, who alone valued the
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the virtues, thought nothing of the fortune of his friend. He knew an upright heart was the highest eminence, which all the acquisition of wealth could never increase, nor the frowns of ill fortune take away, and he laughed at external circumstances of grandeur.

Notwithstanding the cautious precepts of his young friend, Mr. *Fairfield* was precipitated by strong passions into an imprudent alliance with a young lady of family and fortune, who, though mistress of every accomplishment that could charm the eye, and satisfy the judgment, had been unhappily educated in the principles of the church of Rome. At first this was not considered as any objection. Scarce settled in his own principles, those of his wife's he conceived to be of little consequence, and beside, his affections were so rivetted, and his attachment so violent, the cool reasoner had little or no weight in the argument, the lover altogether prevailed. But time soon corrected his error: the two first years of their union brought them a son and a daughter, whom as they advanced to maturity, the father was careful to initiate in the protestant faith, the religion of his fathers; and as he began to grow daily more convinced of its importance, he spared no pains to fit his children for themselves, and society and time, and the internal world. This difference of religious opinion, however, unhappily frustrated, in a short time, every endeavour of Mr. *Fairfield*, to maintain the harmony of his household; and at length obliged him to yield to a separation from his wife, and to allow her the

education of the daughter, as it had been stipulated in the marriage articles, in the tenets of the church of Rome. He would plead with her, and beseech her by all the charities to renounce a doctrine so big with error, but the prejudices of education were superior to all persuasions, tho' the wife wept, the religious was inexorable, and a separation very soon succeeded.

This was the keenest affliction Mr. *Fairfield* had ever before experienced, his fortitude was exercised to the utmost, and he found no relief, save in the conversation of his friend. It was about this period, that Mr. *Bentley*, after the death of his wife, had retired from the world, and as *Fairfield* had no attachment more dear to him on this side the grave, he determined to follow him to his retreat, to imitate his recluse life, and forget the unfortunate circumstances of his marriage.

His house in the country was an elegant mansion, suited to his spirit and fortune, and as he particularly preferred it for its vicinity to the hermitage of Mr. *Bentley*, a pleasant walk of about two miles, made them happy in the company of each other. As he studied to give every proof of confidence in the morals, and ingenuity of his friend, he submitted to him the tuition of his son, and, excepting a few months which a lawsuit compelled him to pass occasionally in town, spent his time entirely in the country.

C H A P. III.

THE two friends were one evening retired from the employment of their useful day, to a summer-house in Mr. *Bentley's* garden, and as sound precepts were constantly mixed with every discourse, however trivial the subject, Master and Miss *Bentley*, and Master *Fairfield*, were present. Miss *Betsy*, who was mistress of a sweet voice, and an accurate ear, had sung the customary evening hymn, which she prettily accompanied with her guitar, and in which all the company cheerfully joined. The old men's eyes glistened with delight, and communicated the rapture to their children. The conversation soon turning to the beauties of the evening, and the advantages of a country life, Mr. *Bentley* observed to his old friend, that he had received an invitation from London, to pass a few weeks in that city; and, says he, I will shew you the answer I have sent to it. He writes to me like a man of this world, who has no notion of another: he writes to me, Sir, in the language of avarice, and talks of my neglecting the improvement of my little fortune, and conceives there is no wealth, no blessing, no peace, no plenty, but what is found in money. I tell him, I allow it must ever be a wonder to active and impatient spirits, that men of a more indolent, easy disposition, can prefer the dull round of country objects to the cheerful vicissitudes

rudes of the town. The man accustomed to a restless life of business, whose mind is never disengaged from the counting-house, the warehouse, the coffee-house, and the exchange, can never account for that tranquility which may possess the minds and hearts of the speculative recluse at a distance from the great city. I grant the same spot, though art and nature unite to make it the most agreeable imaginable, may weary in time, even the fancy of a poet ; and a life of calm reflection and leisure, appears to the world in general, too terrible to be thought of. But I tell him, Sir, every plant thrives best in the soil to which it is adapted ; that the busy spirit is not made for solitude, nor the passive one for the town ; but that each may feel a particular advantage in the situation his nature requires. That respecting myself, above my natural affection for the country, I have every rational objection to scenes of art, and misery, and fraud ; that I conceived my soul not safe in the distraction of London ; and therefore, from motives of policy, as well as regard, withdrew hither. Sweet spot ! I have now passed fifteen years in peace and pleasure, and will, as long as I live, bear witness, to your solitary virtues. I will, if please heaven, never, never forsake this retreat for humble virtue, chearful hope, and peaceful meditation ; but lay me down to rest with the peasants of the valley, who have never mixed with the mistaken world, nor been polluted by its strange maxims. The refinements of polished society have no charms for *Bentley*. The wisdom (I tell him) that is taught in seminaries and schools

schools of science, may feed the avarice of the mind for knowledge, but seldom benefits the heart; and the confusion of opinions, with which the libraries of the learned abound, either tend to confine men's prejudices to objects of little moment, or to keep the more liberal in a constant fluctuation of sentiments, and make them sceptics in the very worst sense of the word. The pride of knowledge, the pride of wealth, the pride of power, the pride of station, agitate the great city, my friend, to which you would seduce me; and you would urge me, who have nearly been shipwrecked by its errors already, to set my foot once more in its mazes, and tempt eternal ruin. But pray, Sir, what joy can a poor uncultivated rustic, as I call myself, take in the assemblies of your polite men, where ceremony is substituted for sense, and plausibility for honesty and candour? How shall I share in the conversation of your beaux esprits, whose wit is so foreign to plain sense and sound wisdom? The charms of the fair can no longer fascinate the man of fifty-three, since his dear *Betsy*, his darling counsellor and tender friend, has forsaken him for a cold bridegroom in the grave.

C H A P. IV.

YOU have opportunities of relaxing the mind, that we cannot have in a country retirement at the wintry season of the year, you have the entertainment of the drama to enliven your evenings; and a thousand specious devices to amuse the sense, and engage the passions abroad, when home grows languid, and reflection tiresome; I wish you joy of these mighty advantages. The poet and the player emulate each other, to charm the fancy; raise the exhilarating laugh, and awaken the temporary tear. But what do you ridicule in the extravagancies of others, that is not in a degree applicable to yourselves? The minutiae of disposition may differ in different men; but there are certain general biases by which all men may be distinguished; and therefore, whatever folly we ridicule in others, either on the stage at the play-house, or the stage of life, is in fact but laughing at ourselves, and reflecting on the weakness of human nature. The sensation of grief, which *Garrick* or *Barry* may occasion, when a king suffers for a lost kingdom, or a lover for the infidelity of a mistress, is possibly an unjustifiable indulgence, when it is reflected how many real objects of misery hourly challenge our pity, and challenge our pity in vain.

We readily pronounce those opinions directed by wisdom, that perfectly correspond with our own;

own; but find it difficult to account for the opposite notions of others. I am persuaded you will in this instance, and many others, call me singular and uncommon; but observe I only mention them as reasons for part of *my* objections to the theatre, and that I wish not to dictate to others.

We are strange self-deceivers, we greedily pass the cheat upon ourselves, and are no longer happy than while fancy is flattered by extravagant delusions, or the judgment is weakened by powerful appeals to the passions. Hence we find both sexes of all ages, all degrees of sense, crouding each night to the play-house. The brilliant figures in the boxes, the bewitching charms of music, the air of delight that is spread over every feature, the wanton attitudes of the actresses, and many other attractions unite, to call off the mind from more rational speculations, inflame the bosoms of youth with licentious wishes; and fix the attention of grey age to the follies of past times, when they should be better engaged in preparing for the happiness of the future. I remember when I was a young man and fond of romance, the theatre was my constant theme, my prevailing infatuation. The rhapsody of bombast was power; the whining of the lover was charmingly affecting and pathetic; the richness of their dresses was grandeur in the extreme, and the clinking of chains in *Bajazet* and *Pierre* I considered the very pinnacle of perfection. But I remember too, I never went to the theatre with a vicious view, nor ever came out of it without many. The poet and the player might both be innocent, but the

the theatre, collectively considered, the company and the glare, spread the poison which is so often fatal to the morals of the youth of both sexes. I remember the worst follies of my life took their rise from that quarter; and that the vagrant connexion, which so long embittered my days, was first made at the play-house.

Oh my dear rural retreat! my sweet pastoral sanctuary from a foolish world! would I had drawn my first breath in these sequestered shades, or had sought thy solitude much sooner; but the present and the future shall endeavour to atone for the past; and I will mix with refined societies no more.

C H A P. V.

MANY are my objections, Sir, to London. That mart of wealth, that seat of learning, that scene of cultivated men. The fulness of your streets, and the emptiness of your churches, equally perplexed me; and I was quite at a loss to account for the avidity with which trifles were anxiously pursued, and the indifference and the contempt with which concerns of the last moment were treated. I witnessed the tumults of avarice in the merchant, and the blindness of dissipation in his clerk. I was shocked at the vanity of beauty, the insolence of wealth, the pride of notional superiority, and the universal weakness
that

that prevailed. I felt myself growing very fast into a kind of cynical contempt for the world, and withdrew in time, to carry a good-natured pity along with me.

But while I thought at a distance of other men's follies, I sincerely felt for my own. I felt there was little room for pride in men; that our boasted wisdom is, at best, but a doubtful light that the advantages of education, designed to distinguish the scholar from the toiling mechanic, were very doubtful pre-eminences indeed. That neither *Plato* nor *Aristotle*, nor *Epictetus*, nor *Socrates*, had discovered a standard for truth; and that most of the questions that divided the schools had better have been totally neglected. That men of science, considered in a natural and perhaps political light, rather confused men's minds, than mended them; and that in religious matters, all metaphysical disquisitions rather tended to amuse the casuist, than to lead the multitude the right way.

Respecting your politicians, I confess to you, I am very far from entertaining a blind respect to my own opinions. I am sensible of every disqualification for a censor, mistaking but too often the pride of prejudice and singularity for judgment and candour. But I am apt to conceive your politicians, and public contenders for sacred freedom, are very often idle declaimers on the one hand, and designing or disappointed hypocrites on the other; and shall be more inclined to credit the professions of public philanthropy, when the
duties

duties of the private station are more religiously observed. I am aware of what Greek and Roman characters may be quoted, and that our own Britain has many illustrious authorities upon record, who have pleaded, who have bled for their country. But I confess I have been inclined to think it possible, that with most, if not all of these, a love of fame, that universal passion, or some occult motive best known to the parties themselves, has stimulated them to public acts of national utility, for which posterity, while they share the benefit, perpetuate the memory of the man.

In this country, the most profligate private character, who impudently professes a liberal love for public virtue, may ever depend on the countenance and protection of the people: flattered into a persuasion of their political importance, the vulgar will readily take the alarm, when the measures of government are condemned, and a popular opposition earnestly sought for.

The prejudices of the ignorant are easily fixed, but the most difficult to be shaken, and though they are ever so sensible of the blessings of a mild government, which gives encouragement to industry, protection to life, and security to possessions, yet they are easily persuaded to swallow the grossest absurdities, which the crafty leaders of a wild faction are inclined to pass upon them.

Such is the genius of the British multitude, that open and disguised enemies to the civil and religious

religious liberties of this country, may always avail themselves of the stale argument, *vox populi, vox Dei*; carefully forgetting that the same acclamations which were given to King James on his return into the city one day, were equally violent in favour of the Prince of Orange another.

I have long been determined to think little of these things. I am persuaded there is a day appointed in the book of infinite wisdom, in which Britain, as well as Rome, shall perish. I love my king; I love my country; without being an enthusiast for divine right, or a public pleader for licentious freedom. When my temples are pillowed on the cold earth, may the constitution of England flourish unimpaired for many, many centuries. And may this land, to remotest generations, be distinguished for wisdom and for virtue.

I will serve the state to the utmost of my ability, by giving the best precept and example I am able, to my poor neighbours, in time of peace; and in war I will gladly unite my arm to theirs, to repel the violence of invaders. But respecting party, I must live superior to narrow contentions. Every thing about me inspires a more peaceful temper. I cultivate my little garden with delight. My son follows me to the field, to assist in tilling the few acres of land that supply my table, and my evening hours pass merrily over chearful books, or in some little romantic innocent excursion about the country: now we hide us in the woods, and wind along the waters, and attend
to

to the song of the nightingale, when the moon-beam silvers o'er the mountains. By taking various routes, we enjoy a constant succession of fresh prospects, we return reluctantly when the landscape begins to fade, and when the dews of evening warn us to depart, are ready to drop a tear along with them.

C H A * P. VI.

MR. *Bentley* often expressed himself oddly. Your clergy, fir, your clergy, fir, are——men, of like passions and frailties as ourselves, and I never expected any supernatural wisdom, any extraordinary talents from them. But a serious attention to the internal welfare of their flock, and earnestness in inculcating the religion of the cross, were the best marks in my esteem of the propriety of a clergyman's character. I confined not myself to *Paul* or *Cephas*, or *Apollos*, but conceived the good of many protestant sectaries made up one catholic church, however they differed in some particular points of doctrine. I conceived the original intention of the pulpit, was merely to exalt some decent grave character, to preach saving truths with strict devotion, and in a language that the poor and the unlearned might understand the way of salvation. I thought one capital objection to the priestcraft of the church of *Rome*, was sealing up holy writ from the multitude in an unknown tongue, and
that

that the translation of the Bible promised to open the eyes of the blind, and give every man an opportunity of judging for himself in a concern of everlasting moment. These, sir, were some of my crude notions respecting the church and the clergy. Judge then what I thought of the refinement of our language, and the politeness of our times, to witness to the strange sacrifice of sense and orthodoxy, and zeal and sincerity, which were so generally made, to elegance of language, and a polished delivery. At my time I remember, in very many chapels and churches about the metropolis, common sense was violently deposed, and *poetry* reigned in its stead. We had the climax of *Tully*, instead of the great deliverer's sermon on the mount, we had figure and metaphor, and extracts from polished poets; because the language of base fishermen was not so well adapted to *amuse* the croud. To amuse the croud! yes, sir; look to your evening lectures, delivered in spruce wigs and starched bands, and tell me if the audience is not to be full as polite, as they are pious; tell me if moral philosophy, such as the poor heathen *Epictetus* taught, is not all you hear; and whether that deficient morality for this day is not the most inconsiderable part of this lecture? Where is sober reasoning? where are the bold appeals to the consciences of callous men? where is the honest zeal of the ambassadors of heaven? all is lost, all is forgotten, all is sacrificed to sound and pleasant period. Like men who have a certain business to execute in a certain time, they lose all in sharpening their tools. If a charity sermon is to be preached, how much is trusted to a pathetic picture!

ture! A deserted orphan, helpless, forlorn, abandoned to the wide uncharitable world, are so many common place figures of rhetorick, to make old gentlewomen and simple virgins subscribe to the plate at the door; and as if christians were to be entertained by a discourse in a church, as by a lecture in a coffee-room, death, hell, judgment and futurity, are not touched upon at all, or else only at a distance. I know many learned rational glorious exceptions to this character. I know men who would have been an honour to the christian church, and true catholic faith in the first æra of its institution, but I observed the evil I have mentioned spreading very fast, and promised to gain ground daily.

I chuse my children should read the Bible without comment, for respecting myself, I was injured by the learned expositors of my day.

C H A P.

C H A P. VII.

I Often think of an expression said to be made by the Czar of Muscovy when in England, that he had but one lawyer in his whole dominions, and would have his head taken off the moment he should return to Moscow. I shall trouble you with no opinion respecting your attorneys, solicitors, &c. because that happens to be one of the solitary sentiments in which all mankind are united.

Perhaps your apothecaries make a trade of a science, and as for your physicians, they are gentlemen; but to soften a little the chemical appearance of past animadversions, suppose, sir, I say in the language of an *Old-Jewry* rhetorician, *O Britain! Britain!* thy daughters are as fair as the lilies of the valley, and thy sons are as sensible as they need be, and who shall pass strictures upon them?

Nothing is more certain than that all men can see small errors in others, and be ignorant of material mistakes in themselves; the eye can see all things but itself; and Mr. *Bentley* condemned perhaps (good man as he was) with a very indifferent grace, the love of warm language in our young preachers, if it is considered how subject the animation of his brain was to transport him beyond the limits of cool reason. But it must be admitted

ted his romantic wild passion for rural beauties, often betrayed him into a novelty of expression, which rather shewed a wish to be freed from the mechanical fetters of common conversation, than a study to offend any grammatical niceties, that are generally expected by the pedant. Respecting school laws, however, he laughed at those who were confined by them, and what was very remarkable, could forgive his son an hundred false concords, and as many confusions of cases, sooner than one silly expletive in discourse, one indecent or irregular expression. We shall make no apology for this digression, but proceed to Mr. Bentley's letter.

In short, sir, the ceremony, the art, the avarice, the doubtful æconomy of the great city, drove me to these retreats, to commune with a weak heart and be still. I will now account to you for my time, and trust you will be satisfied, that the duties of the domestic private station, if properly attended to, are sufficient for many hours in the four-and-twenty, and that to a man studious to act a useful part, no retirement need be inactive. A good *Spanish* proverb has it, *The devil tempts all men but the idle man—the idle man tempts the devil*; the force of this adage ever had its weight with me. A mind totally disengaged from care, will naturally prey upon itself, and for want of outward objects to fix its attention, will be perplexed with an infinite variety of vexation; hence perhaps it arises, that men of easy independant fortunes, often pursue extravagancies in vice, the vulgar little dream of: the
natural

natural degeneracy of the heart, is certainly the same in all men, but all men have not the same opportunity of pursuing the vicious bent of their passions. The poor and prudent mechanic, who is confined to the counter or the warehouse, the hammer or the anvil, from dawn to the decline of day, who has a family to provide for, a character to preserve, an interest to promote, and a little necessary property to secure, makes home the great object of his care; he has little opportunity of debauching his mind with vicious books, or of corrupting his principles by irregular society. The refinements of learning he leaves to men of more taste, the confidence of knowledge betrays him into no error, he thinks the laws established in profound wisdom, and the gospel he acknowledges to be the grand criterion of truth, and presumes not to ask questions about them. Had men of fortune I fancy more engagements for their minds, their hearts would be less corrupted. It is the weight of time, the terrors of leisure, the vast blank of thought, that peoples the stews, the card tables, and the idle circles of fashionable folly that universally abound. It is leisure leads the senator to the horse-race, and the peer to the bagnio. The daughters of industry are seduced by men of leisure, the sons of plain citizens are corrupted by men of leisure, the ridiculous fopperies of dress and conversation are propagated by men of leisure; and I will maintain that the native genius of this country, is sacrificing very fast to the vices of men of leisure; their luxuries, their debaucheries: their savage maxims have reached the peasant at the ploughshare,

share, and the plain manners of our hardy forefathers promise very soon to be totally forgotten. The tradesman and the artist I must ever consider to be the best sinews of the state, and therefore reverence the Dean of *St. Patrick's* inclination to respect every cobbler that pass him, and to think with him, that the man who makes two blades of corn grow, where but one grew before, is far more useful to society than the whole tribe of leisure literate put together.

C H A P. VIII.

BEFORE I withdrew, fir, hither, I weighed maturely possible disappointments against probable advantages, what I was sure to renounce, and what I was uncertain of attaining. I had my apprehensions, lest an excess of solitude, after much bustle, might drive me back to care and commerce; but I found my deficiencies of moral wisdom too great, not to risque some present convenience to retrieve it. I thought with that sweet poet Mr. *Thomson*, I could not go where universal love not reigned around; and beside, I had a notion of a physical or constitutional as well as a moral rational happiness, and resolved to trust something to it. The training of my little ones for heaven, is a work of care and attention. The little land I came possessed of by the death of my cousin had been
long

long neglected, and I found the dispositions of the poor rusticks about me, in little better situation. I determined to cultivate both to the utmost of my power, by the sweat of my brow, and the maxims of my mind. An early attention to botany gives me a smattering knowledge of the virtues of simples, and this study I daily employ in the service of humanity; nor is divinity, my delightful meditation, forgot to be applied where it is wanted. The old shepherd reclines his grey head upon his crook, and blesses me for the truths that I teach him; and when the oxen are released from the team, the plough-boy seeks for instruction. When little differences arise, I arbitrate between the parties, and in every difficulty or doubt, am applied to as a counsellor and a friend. The poor man divides my little loaf with me, and the fainting traveller rests him at my porch, and rejoices over the fruit of my vintage. My little income is sufficient for the utmost wishes of my heart, and enables me to cloath the naked, and feed the hungry, and relieve the necessities of patient merit, and make the whole hamlet to smile about me. My son chearfully assists me in these duties, he carries the medicine to the sick, and divides the burden with the weary. The small knowledge of books I allow him gives him a consequence for his learning, and he employs the little influence he thus acquires with much judgment and discretion. I tell him a fur gown or gold chain can never exalt a man intrinsically, nor the lowest offices of humanity degrade him. When you see the aged, my son, stooping under their bundle of dry sticks, see you lay the faggot at

at their door; and if the proud man condemns your education, pity him, and pass him by. My dear and darling daughter supplies to me in great measure the loss I have sustained in her dear mother; she amply rewards my tender care of her infancy, by a diligence of duty I cannot describe to you. The conduct of my little family is hers; her œconomy at home enables her to be liberal abroad; and she loves all my best lessons, and piously pursues them. When the business of the field, or the necessities of our neighbours keep my son and I longer absent than usual, the sweet smile of affectionate complacency welcomes our return, the decent table is prepared, the chearful blaze provided, and the harmony of the evening begins. She has naturally a sweet voice, and plays with some correctness on the harpsichord; my son is a tolerable proficient on the flute, and respecting myself, I can only furnish some rude ballads to aid our concert occasionally. I hunt sometimes, and fish more frequently. I smoke a pipe now and then with the curate, club a dry joke with the barber, talk of pronouns and participles with the school master, and condemn smuggling with the excise-man. I have composed some scraps of poetry, but of that no matter.

In one corner of my little garden is an humble hermitage, made up of roots, and decorated with some memento's of mortality, to which in my chearfullest moments I retire. I converse there with the preaching dead, and say to the worm, Thou art my sister. I think of the conquerors that have dropt their truncheons in the cold grave, of wits that are for ever silent, and
of

of beauties that have resigned their graces. They teach me what I am, and what I soon must be; and I thank death for preaching so profoundly. My library is a very small one, and confined to books of moral entertainment. Philosophy and science find no harbour there, for, alas! sir, I have little or no respect for worldly wisdom.

I almost forgot to mention one of my dear *Betsy's* more favourite engagements, and that is, I have committed to her entire care, the instruction of about a dozen poor children. She calls them, sir, drooping flowers of the desert, that want a tender hand to sustain them; and sure, papa, she says, with God's blessing, they shall find one. I will teach them all you have so wisely taught me, and I hope one day to see my assiduity answered. Tender, susceptible sweet girl, how my soul doats upon your virtues! in the morning of life you shine with meridian lustre. The father, the father, my child, will ever glory in the goodness of his daughter, and the Father of all will reward it.

Thus, sir, I have described to you some few of my many objections to the great city, and my attachments to *Carmarthenshire*. You will never more, I am persuaded, invite me to London. Here my affections are engaged, here my reason is satisfied, and here I shall lay my ashes. A plain and peaceful stone shall one day cover my remains, and no pride of epitaph shall draw the traveller to gaze at it. The villagers perhaps for some few years may tell how much I loved them, but all things

fooner or later are forgotten. No matter, sir, no matter. Here Mr. *Bentley* concluded, and Mr. *Fairfield*, after thanking his old friend for the entertainment of his letter, took his cane and departed.

C H A P. IX.

HOW few is the character of Mr. *Bentley* calculated to please? The man of the world will call his singularity contemptible, the man of learning will ridicule his strange maxims, but the man of sense and candour shall forgive the mistakes of his benevolent heart, and pity the errors of his understanding.

If ever man was happy upon earth, it was Mr. *Bentley*; he was indifferent about the general vexations of sense and time, and confident in his prospects of futurity. The blessing of his neighbours waited upon him, for in the language of holy *Job*, he was "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor." His friend distinguished him with the most cordial regard, and his children did honour to the education he gave them. Master *Bentley* was a modest, sensible lad of fifteen, intirely free from the impetuous vivacity which generally marks the tempers of young men at that period. He was inquisitive for, and susceptible of knowledge, but a sense of the

the vanity of human wisdom, joined to a superficial knowledge of himself, corrected any degree of pride that might result from the superiority of his genius. He wished not to waste the midnight lamp for fame, but from what his own judgment suggested, he thought his father had confined him. He would wish at times to be permitted to see something of the great world, and hoped to be superior to its temptations. He was however content to follow the parent's precepts to the utmost, doubted much of his strength, and obeyed his father with pleasure. As we hear in Mr. *Bentley's* letter, he would follow the old man to the field, and help to turn the furrow in the spring, and bind up the sheaves in autumn; and when the busy duty of the day was done, would watch the planetary worlds, and study the solar system. For Mr. *Bentley* had taught his children some general laws of astronomy, to impress upon their young minds a solemn sense of his wisdom and power, by whom the infinity of space was peopled. He was ready at every call of humanity, and so tenderly conscious of the weakness of our natures, that had an enemy cursed him in his wrath, he would have embraced, and wept over him.

Miss *Bentley* was two years younger than her brother, but had a discretion and propriety of thinking much beyond her age. Her person was rather short, and her shape proportionably slender; there was an elegance in every limb, and a sweet symmetry in all her features. The bloom of her cheeks rather spoke the health of a rustic,

than the delicate vermilion of a court beauty; her eyes conveyed a modest sensibility when she spoke, and a conscious innocency of thought when silent. Her papa had given her early in life his sentiments respecting the dress that pleased him, and a natural lovely taste directed her, in the little ornaments of her person; her fine hair hung negligently in loose curls about her neck, and the placing a few artificial flowers was the only attention she paid it; an elegant simplicity was expressed in every thing she wore, and her neatness was rather a pattern for the peasants daughters to imitate, than the effect of any desire to distinguish herself above them. She was modest without affectation, and lively with the strictest prudence; diffident of her own sense, and timid in conversation; her knowledge was very far from being confined to the duties of the domestic station, but Mr. *Bentley* thought he consulted some prudence in directing a considerable share of her attention that way. She had all the easy natural politeness that is superior to study, and that sense of good breeding which despises form. Her father had carefully cultivated a respectful tender distance of behaviour between his children, which constantly preserved the strictest harmony and good nature: her tenderness, if possible, was superior to that of her brother, the pain of the minutest animal, would give her an inconceivable sensation; if a fly struggled in the water, she would gladly go a mile to save it; and would object to walking in the grass in summer, lest her foot should injure some poor insect, and shorten its busy day. She was devout with the strictest piety, and constantly

stantly chearful and resigned; her sentiments were free from prudish austerity, yet serious and well guarded; she was, in short, my dear reader, mistress of every accomplishment I wish for in a wife, and perhaps I have a lady in my idea, who answers to all the best strokes of this picture.

C H A P. X.

IT is remarked in the beginning of this volume, that Master *Fairfield* was committed to Mr. *Bentley's* care and tuition. The young gentleman therefore went constantly every morning, with his little satchel, to Mr. *Bentley's*, and considered him rather as a father and a friend, than a master and a teacher; he was near his fourteenth year, and possessed a strong mind that promised to credit his tutor; a particular friendship subsisted between the lads, and a strict emulation to keep pace with each other in their learning was mutually beneficial. Mr. *Bentley* saw with pleasure that they promised to perpetuate the good understanding, that had so long subsisted between their fathers, and conceived the flame of friendship would be preserved, when the turf should flourish over his bones. My dear children, he would say, continue to love each other as you do now; when your fathers are dissolving in dust, this precept shall do you service. When you have witnessed to the treachery of the

world in some few years to come, you will find an asylum in each other that will never fail you. You have talents to serve the world, and may one day be a blessing to society, but if you are wise with prudence, you will be cautious of engaging too deeply in the affairs of the great world ; you will make this or some other retirement your home, and be content with the society of yourselves, and benefit your fellow creatures at a distance from the great city. In this kind of familiar stile Mr. *Bentley* conveyed all his instructions, and the boys eyes would gladden with pleasure ; when he talked, they would grasp his hand in earnest attention, and think him an oracle of wisdom. Miss *Bentley*, who always loved to be near her papa, was generally present when his darling young friends, as he called them, were instructing ; she would witness at a modest distance to the behaviour of her brother and *Fairfield*, and share in the general lesson that was given. Whatever was the reason, she thought these instructions the most delightful of any her papa could give, and would dispatch her little domestic concerns with uncommon diligence, that she might never be absent a moment. As she carried her work constantly with her, her needle would be frequently idle, and a sort of pleasing absence to every thing, but the objects before her, take place of every other consideration. She was happy to join with her papa in every encomium upon her brother, nor did young *Fairfield* fail of his reward. On the other hand, the young stranger considered the presence of Miss *Bentley* essentially necessary to make the lessons of her father

sink

sink deeper into his mind. His eyes would frequently seek a glance from hers, and if she was absent a moment, instinctively turn towards her chair. Mr. *Bentley*'s approbation made him proud, but the smile of his daughter made him happy. He would carefully study a situation, that might keep her constantly in his view, and was tenderly officious in watching for opportunities to please her. At dinner-time his chair was drawn constantly close to hers, and he would attentively consult her looks to fetch any thing before she asked for it. If a question escaped her sweet lips, he trembled and hesitated for an answer; and if his discourse insensibly turned to Miss *Betsey*, the sweet girl would blush, and not readily reply. As Mr. *Bentley* and his son were frequently absent in the fields, or in the neighbouring villages, Master *Fairfield* would be preparing his lesson at home, and enjoying the company of his dear *Betsey*. But if the young lady, as was her constant study, was engaged in any tender offices abroad, attending the sick bed, or distributing bread to the indigent, he would make a thousand excuses to attend her on her way, or meet her in the evening at her return. He loved to walk under a row of solemn elms, that almost darkened the path at mid-day, and sigh with a pleasing anxiety, and live upon the image of Miss *Bentley*. He would wait for her with impatience at some stile he expected her to pass, and the sight of any distant female stranger upon the common, would urge his feet swiftly towards her; but when near

enough to be convinced of his mistake, he would stop short, pass the back of his hand across his eyes, and return dejected to his station.

C H A P. XI.

SUCH was the situation of the little family at Mr. *Bentley's*. The modest diffidence, the tender sensibilities of a delicate passion, kept Master *Fairfield* long silent, and we shall only observe at present, that the young gentleman had many advantages both of person and mind, about which the amiable rustic was very far from being insensible.

Master *Bentley* had been sent one morning to the village, on an errand of mercy, to carry a warm coat and a pair of stockings to the industrious father of a large family; but waiting longer than usual, his father began to grow uneasy; it was certain his knowledge of decorum would not keep the family from dinner, and they waited with patience till that time. The hour arrived, but brought with it no son, no brother, no friend. The afternoon advanced, and the old gentleman began to grow uneasy; he disguised his fears, however, from his daughter some time, till he could restrain his anxiety no longer. He was sure some extraordinary accident had happened

pened to retard him, and he was determined to seek the cause. Young *Fairfield* attended. They had scarce left the house an hundred paces, when they perceived *Bentley* making slowly for his home, supporting the feeble knees of an old officer, who was stooping to the earth in some excess of sorrow. Mr. *Bentley* did not wait to be informed of the circumstances of his case, it was sufficient that he was a man and afflicted. He flew to the assistance of his son, and sustained the stranger's sinking head, administered to his immediate wants, and waited impatiently for his story.

C H A P. XII.

“**Y**OU see before you, sir, a man of no common misery, was the first sentence that he uttered. I have been wounded, sir, in fighting my country's battles often, but my heart never bled till now — no, sir, never bled till now. But all must be soon over.” Here a flood of tears bathed his reverend face, and he was silent for many minutes. Then recovering a little his fainting spirits, “You will judge, sir, from the colour of my coat, that I have the honour of bearing his Majesty's commission, and from the discreditable appearance that I make before you, will guess I am reduced to half pay. Excepting the disgrace it brings upon an honourable profession, I have no
 C 5 objection

objection to the confinement of my circumstances, for I have been used to live hard, and am very indifferent about trifling considerations. In *Flanders* I have slept cheerfully on my arms whole nights, with no pillow but the damp earth, no covering but the tempest; when Count *Daun* surprized the *Prussian* camp, and forced the piquet in dead of night, I was wounded by the side of the brave Marshal *Keith*, but it was denied me to die with him. I was wounded in my left arm at the plains of *Minden*, and lost this eye by a blow from a *French* fusée in a skirmish. This, sir, and much more I have suffered, but suffered without repining, for I dedicated my life to the service of my country, and was prepared to lose it every hour. I fear, sir, I am tedious, I am troublesome; I give you pain, my sweet young lady; but bear with me, sir, bear with me, my young friends, a little longer, for I am very old, and my intellects may have suffered for aught I know; and perhaps I dwell too much upon the exploits of the foldier, when I should account to you for the anguish of the man.

I am now, sir, more than sixty years of age; yes, sir, the bleak winds of more than sixty winters have whistled round this weak head, and a few grey hairs are all the honours they have left me. I have passed more than forty years in the service, yet have lived to see this day; but my old heart is broken within me, and all must very soon be over." Here he paused again, and laid his hand upon his heart, and wiped the dew from his forehead, fixed his streaming eyes upon the ground,

ground, and was silent. The old soldier's affliction excited a general sympathy round Mr. *Bentley's* fire-side; the young lady watched the emotion of her father, while her tears trickled fast down her bosom; and her brother inclined his handkerchief to the officers cheek, but withdrew it for fear of offending.

Again he reassumed his story. "My father, who carried arms under the Duke of *Marlborough*, trained me from infancy for the field, and before he died, which happened at the latter end of *Queen Anne's* reign, procured for me a military commission. Indeed it was the only subsistence that he left me. I was then very young, and the charms of a cockade operated, in its full force, on the vanity of the young soldier. I shall pass over the idle gallantries of my youth, and proceed to that period of my life, which immediately leads to the distressing dilemma, under which my soul now labours. At the age of thirty-five, when the fire of youth gives place to more temperate passions, my regiment being quartered at *Nottingham*, I was introduced to the acquaintance of a genteel family, and formed a rational attachment for the eldest daughter of it. The young lady was personally agreeable, but possessed in my esteem a qualification far more engaging and essential in the marriage state, an uncommon harmony of disposition, and sweetness of temper, that charmed all who were distinguished by her acquaintance. Her fortune was indeed very inconsiderable for a man in my inferior situation, but I had acquired early in life a contempt for mercenary

nary contracts, and as her friends were pleased to entertain some prepossession in my favour of my prudence, they made little hesitation in gratifying my wishes, and we were in a few months united. Seven happy tranquil years had expired in the strictest harmony and affection, before my *Isabella* blessed me with a daughter. A profound peace prevailed at that time throughout *Europe*, and I had turned my sword into a ploughshare, and enjoyed the sweets of domestic repose. My daughter was scarce a year old when war broke out again, and as I had an opportunity of procuring a lieutenancy in a marching regiment, on very advantageous terms, by the advice of my friends I once more pursued the fortune of the field, and carried a pike into *Germany*. My dear wife, who had been educated with a delicacy ill-suited to the hardships of a camp, loved me too tenderly to remain behind, and we carried our darling treasure, young as it was, along with us. At this period of my sad story the darkness of to-day, the darkness of to-day begins. My regiment being quartered in a village in *Germany*, uncommonly pleasant in its situation, my *Isabella*, who was passionately fond of the country, and particularly charmed with the novelty of the scenes before her, would frequently solicit me to walk with her. I was never quite happy when absent from her an hour, and loved to avail myself of some retirement from the more noisy conversation of the camp, to talk with her of past peace, and suggest plans for the future. I loved her each day better than the former, for each day some virtue improved upon me. If the duty of my
station

station confined me, she would often ramble alone with a favourite author, or in company with one or more of the officers ladies. O, sir! how shall I recount what follows? One morning, one fatal morning, she asked my consent, as I could not attend her myself, to make one with a little rambling party of female friends, and promised to be back again by dinner. O my sweet *Bella!* little did we then think that we were about to be separated for ever. The child was sleeping in the cradle, and as she always kissed it before she left the room, I think since, I remember she dwelt upon it with uncommon rapture, and looking me tenderly in the face, asked with a smile, if I did not each day trace some new likeness of its mother. I remember to have felt an uncommon sensation at the time. I would have answered her, but an inexpressible something arose in my throat; I could only press her ardently to my bosom, and gaze attentively on her face, and that of the child's, and indulge an extraordinary emotion in silence. I never, sir, was disposed to be superstitious, but confess to you, I have thought something at times of a possible invisible agency, and have been inclined to credit a sympathy, superior to a common combination of matter. What I then felt I feel more, and shall perhaps even when the clay cold hand of death is on me. But, sir, to be brief, the campaign was begun, and some hostilities had been committed on both sides, and as I have since learned, my wife and her companions, falling in with a small party of our troops that were appointed to forage, they were surprized by a superior force of the enemy, and
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the ladies made captives with the prisoners of war. You, sir, I conceive from what I see before me, have been a husband yourself, and can more easily feel, than I describe, the anguish that I then endured, the tortures that long overwhelmed me: when hope gave way to the most distressing fear, and the horrors of despair succeeded; for days and weeks, months and years I enquired for her in vain, and passed my time in the most frantic extravagancies, till my intellects were nearly shaken." Mr. Bentley placed his elbow on his knee, grasped his handkerchief in his hand, and laid his face upon it.

C H A P. XIII.

"**A**T length, sir, time and the hurry of my profession healed up my wounds in part, but they will often bleed afresh to this day. I continued abroad till the end of last war, when my regiment being ordered for *England*, was soon after broke, and myself reduced to half pay. After the loss of my wife, I felt myself a strange solitary creature, disqualified altogether for mixt societies; the noise of intemperate mirth, and the sallies of fashionable wit, had no charms for my mind; and I withdrew as soon as possible from the circle of a large military acquaintance, and devoted my

my whole study and assiduity to revive the best image of my lost *Isabella*, by cultivating my daughter's mind. I watched over her infant hours with uncommon attention, and noted every little gradation of reason with pleasure. As she advanced to years of discretion, my little fund was taxed to the utmost to provide her the best masters, and I had the satisfaction of seeing my pains rewarded. On the reduction of my circumstances, I retired to a little village in the North of *England*, to observe the stricter frugality of living, and be enabled to leave a better provision for my daughter. You would say, if ever you had seen her, that same, who has long been lavish in her praise, could not say too much of my lovely *Isabella Barton*. Her person is uncommonly elegant and majestic, and the graces of her soul would charm you. She was the constant theme of youth, and the admiration of age. A strict exemplary conduct endeared her to the pious; an extraordinary brilliancy of understanding recommended her to the sensible: the gay were chastised by her wit, and the grave were supported by her example. When the mother reproved the daughter, she directed her attention to *Miss Barton*. When the brother pleaded with his sister, he would advise her to be guided by *Miss Barton*. And when the lover complimented his mistress, it was enough if he compared her to *Miss Barton*. You will suspect all this to be the prejudice of the father, but the whole village will witness to the truth of it. I dwell more particularly on this picture, to account in part for some rash mistakes that follow.

As

As the most polite people about us sought earnestly to be distinguished by her acquaintance, I was obliged to suffer occasional intrusions upon my solitude, and to contract a familiar correspondence with many of my genteel neighbours. Being invited one day with my daughter, on a party of pleasure, to a gentleman's house, some little distance from my own, I had an opportunity of witnessing to something particularly correct in the behaviour of a young officer at my friend's table. I was struck with his whole deportment at first sight, and sought studiously to lead him into conversation. I learned he was about eighteen years of age, and possessed a judgment would have done honour to eight-and-twenty. He made the most accurate remarks on men and manners, when good breeding compelled him to speak, but seemed to have a just respect for the weight of years; would call his observations cursory and imperfect, and modestly requested to be corrected by the better understanding of the company. I could not account for it at the time, but I took particular delight in his company, and gave him a general invitation to my table. The more opportunities I thus had of observing the strictness of his sense, and the propriety of his behaviour, the more forcible was my prejudice in his favour.

During my travels in foreign parts, I had seen and conversed with many accomplished young men, but thought I had never, till then, seen one for whom nature had done so much, or education improved more. He had much of the know-

knowledge of the schools, without any of their formalities; and from the little time he had lived in the world, had acquired a knowledge of human nature, often wanting at fourscore. In short, sir, I had such an entire confidence in his integrity, and such a regard for his company and conversation, that I insisted he would consider my house as his own, while he staid in that part of the country, and treat me in every respect as a companion, a friend, and a father. You will think this conduct imprudent on account of my daughter, but to confess a truth to you, I thought I had observed a dawning passion for each other, and was inclined to encourage it, if it could be done consistently with my daughter's honour and my own. Respecting his fortune, he had informed me, it depended solely on his sword, and that his family were either totally extinct, or the remaining branch of it lived in total obscurity. This satisfied my doubts, respecting the offer of my daughter, and confirmed his title to my protection.

I one day took occasion to sound my *Bella* in his favour, and received the frankest declaration of her wish to be regulated, in every circumstance of life by my inclination, and expressed herself, as far as delicacy would permit, ready to attend to the first notice the young gentleman should pay her. But, papa, said she with a smile, you take perhaps more pains than is necessary, in pleading for this polished soldier, for I assure you, considering he is so polite a man, he has the least
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gallantry for a military swain, that ever I heard of. I conceived what she said to be an additional proof of his prudence and discretion, and determined, on some future day, to give him my sentiments on the subject of my intention; previous to this eclairsissement I was called suddenly to town, to attend the sick bed of a gentleman who had intrusted me with the management of a little estate in my neighbourhood, and who wanted my assistance in regulating his affairs. Apprehensive his illness would prove fatal, I took an affectionate leave of my daughter, and a cordial one of my young friend, and repaired for the great city. There to my great joy I found the gentleman recovered; the settling of my accounts detained me a very few days, and I flew back again, rather with the transport of a lover, than the affection of a father, to take my child again to my arms, doubly endeared to me by absence.

C H A P. XIV.

I Was impatient of every delay, scarce allowed myself necessary refreshments on the road, and the moment the chaise stopped at the village, flew to meet the embraces of my darling *Isabella*. So eager were my wishes, I did not allow myself time to consider the evening was very far advanced, and the family might be probably in bed, but hastened to see my daughter. A favourite dog welcomed me the moment I laid my hand on the latch of the outward gate, and as I found every thing quiet I gently opened the street door, with a key I always carried in my pocket, and proceeded with a cautious step, for fear of giving her an alarm, gently to my daughter's chamber; a lamp that was burning in the chimney, led me to her bed-side; I laid my hand upon the curtains, and softly withdrew them, and was about to whisper her name, in the softest accents of parental love, when I beheld a second person in the bed, in a profound sleep, and the regimentals of the young soldier thrown carelessly on a chair. My whole soul was petrified with amazement at that instant, my knees smote each other, my head swam, and my heart sickened, and the horrors of eternal infamy harrowed up every faculty of my soul; judge you, sir, what accumulated distress assailed me. I laid my hand upon my sword,

sword, but the parent pleaded within me. The honour of the officer came to my relief, and I laid my hand upon my sword again. Providence and heaven! can the struggle of that moment ever be forgotten? Thrice I essayed to wash out the disgrace of my family with the blood of the offender, and thrice I directed the steel to my own throbbing bosom, but the arm of the Omnipotent restrained me. After a deluge of tears had given a momentary relief, I determined to desist from taking immediate vengeance, and withdrew the same silent way I came, to consult on some means to revenge my wrongs on the young traitor, and conceal the infamy of my child. I wept fore, fir, when I came to the outward gate, to think that in so few moments, such different sensations possessed me. I lifted up my streaming eyes to the light at my daughter's window, and thought instant distraction would have seized me. I laid my trembling hand on the door-post for support, but my strength was exhausted in the struggle, and I fell motionless on the ground. How long I continued in that insensible situation, I cannot guess; but when I came to myself, I found a calmer state of mind had succeeded to the violence of phrenzy. It was more than midnight, and the whole village was at rest; the farmers dogs barked alternately at each other, and the mournful note of the screech-owl helped to increase my horror. I strayed negligently in the fields, indifferent about to-morrow's sun, and wished for eternal night, to hide my shame and my distress together.

After

After revolving in my mind a multitude of resolutions, I determined to challenge the unhospitable wretch, who had given the fatal stab to my peace, and if I survived the duel, and found my daughter not quite lost to shame and remorse, to duty and to reason, to invite the wanderer from the error of her ways, pity the frailty of humanity, and press her once more to my bosom."

C H A P. XV.

"**A**S soon as day-light appeared I repaired to a kind of a post-house in the village, and calling for pen, ink, and paper, began to write the challenge; but before I had finished it, the bar-maid delivered me a letter, which, she said, had been left for me by a young gentleman, who had taken post-horses that morning. What was my indignation, when I discovered, upon opening it, the hand-writing of the deceiver, to whom I imputed my child's ruin! He expressed in his epistle a warm sense of the many favours I had conferred upon him; thanked me for the hospitable treatment I had shewn him; was sorry a sudden call of business carried him to *Brussels* before my return from *London*; but would employ the first moments of his return to throw himself at my feet, &c. Villain! coward! hyppocrite! degenerate insulter! said I, this is too much, too much indeed;

indeed; after the injury you have done my daughter, basely to insult my age, and abuse the little understanding you have left me, is indeed more than I can suffer; but (stamping my foot vehemently upon the ground) you shall find, young man, what it is to massacre the peace of a father, to wound the honour of a soldier, to violate the laws of hospitality, and insult the spirit of a man; to the extremity of the globe will I pursue you, and will trust the issue to my sword; though I lose my life in a desert, and find no burial for my bones. I ordered a chaise immediately, and while it was getting ready, wrote to my daughter as follows. I have a copy in my pocket."

'Wretched! wretched *Isabella!*

'Little do you think of the discovery I made, last night, of your infamy, and my own dishonour. I shall lose no time in vain expostulations. I find the traitor is gone for *Brussels*, and the chaise waits to carry me to him. Perhaps, my child, you will never see your father more; never see him more. If I die you will do well to repent of your misconduct, for depend upon it, if I live, and you are disposed for penitence and contrition, I will, I will forgive you. My tears flow faster than my ink, but the calls of honour are inexorable.—Farewel, perhaps, for ever.'

"I immediately began my route, and reached *Brussels* in a few hours after the man I sought for.

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I easily traced him to the post-house in that city, and calling to him in the midst of a public company of gentlemen, desired the waiter to shew me a private room, and beckoned him to follow me. The indifferent, careless, easy air of civility, with which he saluted me, I considered a superfluous insult after what had happened, and my rage knew no bound. I suppressed it, however, till I reached the room, and then fastening the door, drew my sword in an instant. Now, villain! I cried, prepare for your defence, or receive the reward of the most complicated baseness, that ever disgraced humanity. He seemed amazed at my paroxysm of anger, and attempted to expostulate with me. I considered it as a mark of cowardice, and insisted on his drawing his sword that instant. It was in vain, he pleaded ignorance of any offence; it was in vain, he professed an uncommon respect for me: Draw, sir, said I, draw without further hesitation, for you have made vulgar villains immaculate by your crimes, and your blood or mine shall flow for it. Here he reluctantly drew to defend himself from the wildness of my fury, and as he rather laid himself open to my violence, than opposed me with the skill he was master of, my first lunge wounded him in the sword-arm, and the next ran him through the body. Good God! good God! have mercy on me! was all the old officer could utter, and fell back senseless in his chair.

C H A P. XVI.

MR. *Bentley's* family officiously administered to his relief, but it was some considerable time before his sighs and tears would permit him to complete his story.—“The noise of my passion, re-assumed he, and his falling upon the floor, brought the people of the house about us; they burst open the door in an instant, and a surgeon was immediately sent for. The first object that struck their view who forced the door, was the young gentleman bleeding on the ground, and myself in a state of stupefaction, leaning with my bloody sword over his body. As I gazed on the miserable situation he was then in, all my anger subsided, and my former tenderness revived in an instant. I wept over him; I wept over him. I grasped his hand, and threw myself on his pale face, and blessed him, and hoped for an instant annihilation. The loss of blood weakened him very much, his life ebbed very fast, and when assistants supported him to a couch, he turned his languid eyes tenderly upon me, and with a voice inexpressibly innocent, enquired, *Mr. Barton*, what have I ever done to deserve this? In what did I ever offend you?” He fainted away immediately after, and the surgeon ordered a warm bed, to which he was conveyed that instant. I raved, I tore my grey hairs; I pressed through the croud, and would not be detained

tained from him an instant. I attended to undress him, and to make him as easy as possible; and assured him, I would never leave his bed-side, 'till I was satisfied of his forgiveness. He could not speak, but looked wishfully upon me, and wept, and again fainted away.

As I was apprehensive the servants were not sufficiently tender in assisting him to bed, I took the office from them. I had taken off his coat and waistcoat, and raised him in my arms, to lay him gently on his pillow, when I felt something hard against my stomach. I opened the bosom of his shirt, and found a miniature picture; what would I have given to have had a marble mountain on my head at that instant! I seized the fatal painting with eagerness, and immediately discovered the features of my wife; upon which I sunk down on the floor. On my recovery, Lead me, lead me, to my son, I cried, lead me to that son I have butchered; for I forgot to mention to you, that my wife was pregnant when I lost her, and I guessed the rest that instant. The people of the house had carried me into another room, and when questioned with my eyes about his life, the croud turned their faces from me, and were mute men. It was too late, he was no more.

As soon as the tumult of my mind would admit of the least information, I learned from the mistress of the house, that the lady of an English officer, some years before, in her way to England, had lain-in at her house, and died a few days after; that she compassionated the helpless

state of the infant, had brought him up as her own son, by the name of *Ashley*, but that his real name was *Barton*. She added, she had disguised from him the doubtful circumstances of his parentage, and had never mortified him with his dependence upon her; but satisfied him, that his friends were deceased, and had left him to her care; that she intended to consider him as her own son, at her death, and had provided for him a commission in the English service, because his mother was of that country. 'Being very ill, said she, I sent for him hither, sir, to take a last leave of him, and make over all my effects to his hands; but I recovered before he arrived, and little expected his death would so soon follow, and by such an hand. I was about to account to her, and some of her friends for my rashness, when an express arrived from a young lady, an affectionate companion of my daughter's, explaining the cause of the mistake, and satisfying me that I was a most rash man, and a murderer. It seemed, my daughter had prevailed on this lady to keep her company, in my absence; and as the young gentleman was gone a little way into the country, she had dressed herself, in a frolick, in a suit of his clothes, the evening before, and left them carelessly in the chair, in their chamber. She urged my instant return to England, as my daughter had taken to her bed, on the first knowledge of my mistaken anger, and it was doubtful if she would live to see me. These considerations, joined to the prudent advice of the company, induced me to take immediate advantage of the night, and instantly repair for England.

A tem-

A tempestuous passage by water, drove me on this coast, and I was this day proceeding on my journey, when the carriage breaking down, about four miles off, the driver was obliged to go back for assistance; but as my impatience would not suffer me to be detained, I was proceeding on foot, when faint, and sick almost unto death, I laid me down by the way-side, and called the great deliverer to finish my existence. There your humane son found me, and here every acknowledgment is due"

By this time, every member of Mr. *Bentley's* little family were absorbed in sorrow. The father fixed his streaming eyes in stedfast amazement on the officer, who seemed lost in the magnitude of his woe. Miss *Betsy* hid her tears in the bosom of her brother, and the young men seemed stupified with affliction. The soldier comforted them in return, and begged they would reserve their grief, for that, for his part, he had done weeping, and his eyes should flow no more. "The hand of heaven is on me, continued he, and I must bear it, but if my daughter is departed before I reach her, she shall not be interred alone."

Mr. *Bentley* comforted him in the best manner he was able, gave him every refreshment and assistance he stood in need of, sent his son for a chaise to the door, and after many tender embraces on all sides, the old officer departed.

C H A P. XVII.

EXCEPTING these occasional condolences with the afflicted officer, nothing interrupted the settled harmony of Mr. *Bentley's* fire-side. The calm chearful evening constantly succeeded the beneficial day, the same round of good offices continued to him the same pleasing reflections; he saw his children advancing to maturity, with the same cautious conduct he had impressed upon their infant minds; and the improvement that was visible in the manners of all the villagers, was a living testimony of the utility of his life and lessons.

Left the reader should be startled by any supposed severity in his disposition, we must assure them, nothing was ever more remote from melancholy or austerity of temper, than the whole life of Mr. *Bentley*. He constantly danced round the garland on May morning; seldom missed a sheep-shearing supper, and would joyfully join in the chorus, *To celebrate harvest home*. He would see the nut-brown bowl replenished, and the horn travel round the table with pleasure. When the old husbandman dwelt upon the exploits of his youth, he loved to indulge him in his tale, and when the young farmer toasted his mistress, he would not let his glass be idle; but then he always judged, how far chearful temperance was to be indulged, and never suffered any to infringe it
in

in his presence. He would write love letters, when applied to by the young villagers, to their sweethearts, and generally gave away the bride, and as readily stood godfather to their children; though he considered it a charge of some moment, and took care to fulfil it to the utmost of his power. He was particularly fond of the innocent pastimes of youth, and often made one among them; he would say, the pursuits of age are little better or wiser. His son *Bill*, he acknowledged, was too much for him at marbles; but at nine-pins, he was more than his equal. At leap-frog, he was not so alert; but at cricket, he was too much for his son. He said, these little amusements relaxed the mind, and promoted healthy exercises of the limbs, and that for his part, he knew of no treason he committed against the gravity of years, either by swinging on a rope, or dancing on a sway board. If these are trifles, said he, inform me what are all our temporary pursuits but trifles. Does not the miser, who groans for gain, follow trifles? Does not the merchant, who plows the deep for luxuries, follow trifles? Do not the learned, who rack their heads for fame, court a trifle? And does not the courtier, that figures in a ribband and a star, pride himself on a very trifle? Let the world then value itself upon its wisdom, but it shall not draw a line for me.

C H A P. XVIII.

THREE more years had gone their rapid round, and confirmed the graces of Miss *Bentley*, when an accident happened, which produced a declaration of young *Fairfield's* passion. Her excellencies had been daily improving upon him, and the dilemma of his affection increased upon him every hour. He would often say, what will be life? what will be fortune? what will be all the world without my charming Miss *Bentley*? Did she know, perhaps, what I suffer for her, she has great goodness of heart, and would pity me at least, if not forgive me. Did she guess how dearly she belongs to my peace, she would attend to the sincerity of my passion. Great is the distress of my mind, but to whom can I fly for relief, and who shall credit my sensations? I reverence her father too much, to risque his displeasure a moment; my dear friend, her brother, would, perhaps, ridicule my flame, and call it weakness; and my papa, though a wise man, may think too much of fortune, to listen to the sensations of my heart with patience. These and such reflections constantly agitated the young lover, nor was the young lady less affected. She had witnessed to the assiduity of Master *Fairfield* with more than a sisterly regard; had sighed often in silence on his account, and dropt some tears on her pillow. But she doubted much of the prudence of encouraging a passion in one, who had
higher

higher hopes, and feared she one day might suffer for her disappointment; she therefore rather discouraged any advances from the young gentleman, and resolved to sacrifice, whatever the struggle cost her, every emotion that flattered her heart, to the more prudent dictates of her reason.

So distant was the behaviour of the young rustic, that Mr. *Bentley* had no suspicion, from what passed between them, or he would have taken, perhaps, some new measures in consequence of it. He remarked, indeed, the paleness of Master *Fairfield*; that he affected solitude more than usual; that his appetite had forsaken him, and his eyes were frequently bent on the ground; but when he addressed him to know the cause, he would study for a temporary cheerfulness, and impute it to some trivial occasion. He would then glance his eyes at Miss *Betsy*, and hang down his head again. At length, however, this perplexity of passion threw him into a violent fever, and his life began to be despaired of. An eminent physician was sent for from *London*, who suspecting the disease lay on his mind, advised his father to spare no pains to relieve it. Mr. *Fairfield* was long assiduous himself, and employed the servants, who attended him, to get from him the fatal secret, but in vain. It was in vain young *Bentley* urged him to disclose it; he said, to be sure he was unhappy, but he hoped his friends would forgive the trouble he gave them, and not question him any more. This taciturnity continued two days, and his fever was constantly increasing. Mr.

Fairfield at length suspecting the graces of Miss *Bentley* had occasioned his son's malady, resolved to search his heart to the utmost, and save him the trouble of a confession. I will fly, said he, this instant, and give him all the relief in my power, and spare his delicacy, his false pride, his timidity, and his blushes.

The old gentleman took a chair by his bed, and taking one of his hands, began.

What, my son, have you ever observed of severity in my behaviour, that should make you fearful to trust me as a friend? or why, in a matter of consequence to your present and future happiness, should you trouble me to guess at a distance, rather than consult me on the occasion with sincerity and candour? You know me, I think, too well to suspect me of narrow principles; and you must be sensible, that my sentiments, as well as yours, have been constantly regulated by your tutor, Mr. *Bentley*. Does he not teach us, to form a higher criterion of thought and action, than any the world can give us? and does he not teach us to be superior to that false shame, which is peculiar to little minds? I, my son, was in love (he fixed his eyes full upon him) with your mother, and perhaps was as ardently attached to her as you can be (the young gentleman blushed and turned his face away) with Miss *Bentley*. Sir! sir! stammered the convicted youth, who I, sir, in love with Miss *Bentley*! I am sure, sir, nobody can say that, from any thing that has escaped my lips; and indeed you question me unfairly.

ly. My dear, replied Mr. *Fairfield*, you need not repent that I have caught you. I know not a more deserving, or a more amiable girl than Miss *Bentley*, and beside, she is the daughter of my friend; believe me, I approve your prepossession in her favour, and desire you will contribute every thing in your power to restore your health, and rely on every thing in mine to make you happy. He saluted his son, and precipitately left the room.

Nothing could so effectually have promoted the young gentleman's recovery, as this kind treatment of his father. His eyes flashed, and his heart danced for joy. His fever gradually forsook him, his spirits mended very fast, and the nurse was soon discarded.

Mr. *Bentley*, who had been made acquainted with all that had passed, admired his friend's nobility of soul; the more, as it tended to perpetuate the family alliance. He expressed himself to his daughter frankly on the subject of young *Fairfield's* illness, and found that a respect for his prudent precepts, rather than any insensibility to the young gentleman's passion, had hitherto restrained her: she acknowledged, the addresses of so worthy a young man would be very far from displeasing, and left it entirely to him, to consult the delicacy of her sex in every thing that might further offer.

C H A P. XIX.

IN the mean time Master *Fairfield* recovered very fast, and was impatient for an interview with Miss *Betsy*; he carefully followed every prescription that promised an early freedom from his chamber, and anticipated the future felicity he should experience in the company of his charming *Betsy*.

At length the day arrived, when his doctor pronounced him capable of walking to Mr. *Bentley's*, and a servant was appointed to attend him. We have already remarked his person was naturally engaging, and his late illness had reduced the strong glow of health upon his cheek, to a pleasing languor of look, that was liable to make a greater impression on the young lady.

We have likewise observed upon her sentiments, respecting the ornaments of her person, and shall only remark, that no studied elegance of dress was consulted on this occasion. She despised all art; she trusted to superior graces than any the toilet could bestow, and respected her lover's sense too much, to suppose he wished for any excess of any ceremony from her. She was seated in an alcove of honey-suckles, at the bottom of the garden, reading *Thomson's Celadon and Amelia*, when *Fairfield's* servant knocked at the door; she blushed with some little confusion, but collected herself

herself instantly, and prepared her eyes to meet the object of her affection. She saw him at the bottom of the path before her, hastening eagerly to the arbour. She arose with a modest suffusion of face, to wish him joy of his recovery, and met him at the entrance of the alcove. He respectfully pressed her hand, and laid his lips tenderly upon it. A pause of some moments ensued. At length recovering himself a little from the mute transport that confined his tongue, he led her, trembling, to a seat, and placed himself beside her. She had not yet withdrawn her hand, and again he kissed it with rapture.

Blessed! blessed be this hour! were the first words that escaped him. You see before you, my dear Miss *Bentley*, a despiser of superfluous forms, yet one that shall vindicate your delicacy to the last hour of his existence; who feels for your situation as well as his own; and who presumptuously wishes to have it known to you, he feels more than he can utter.

As your amiable sincerity is the best foundation for my hope; your perfections are my best apology for this declaration of my passion; and happy, happy shall I think myself, if you will permit me to devote my whole life to improve, to the utmost of my ability, any little shadow of a favourable opinion, you may have ever so distantly entertained concerning me.

I address

I address you under a strict sense of your superiority to those contemptible arts, that are generally used on these occasions. I reverence your dissention from the mistaken maxims of your sex, and will endeavour, in every thing, to accommodate myself to the just notions you entertain of propriety. Forgive me, Miss *Bentley*, that before I made the tacit confession to my father, I did not solicit your approbation; but such were the circumstances of my heart, that unless parental tenderness had urged it from me, I had carried the secret to my grave.

Permit me only to rest assured, you can pardon me for what is past, and allow me to put a favourable construction on your silence, respecting the future. Again he respectfully raised her hand to his lips, and imprinted a salute upon it.

I should be unworthy, Master *Fairfield*, said the young lady, the lessons my papa has taught me, if I was capable of any dissimulation; or neglect to confess some approbation of a passion, authorized and recommended as yours is. I confess to you, declining her head and blushing, I have never seen the gentleman capable of exciting a tender emotion in my bosom, if the person before me has not; you will do well to continue the same propriety of morals, for which I have hitherto distinguished you, and may trust something to my regard for sincerity and discretion. Here she motioned to go towards the house, and *Fairfield* politely attended.

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From this time the young people had frequent opportunities of conversing freely together. Young *Bentley* would indeed sometimes expostulate with his friend on the little of his company he allowed him, but took a pleasure in his sister's happiness, and would cheerfully sacrifice his own to promote it. In all *Fairfield's* addresses to Miss *Bentley*, he observed that strict mediocrity of language that speaks a just judgment, correcting a lively disposition; his discourse was free from the unnatural raptures of romance, and the insipid languor of insensibility; he paid her no extravagant compliments at the expence of her sex, nor insulted her sense by superfluously flattering her person. He was assiduous without being servile, and respectful without formality. Miss *Betsy*, on the other hand, equally avoided the severity of the prude, and the levity of the coquet, and perfectly understood Mr. *Fairfield*.

C H A P.

C H A P. XX.

MR. *Fairfield*, who justly entertained the strongest prejudice in favour of his friend's daughter, was happy in the prospect of so prudent an alliance for his son, and took every opportunity to share with Mr. *Bentley* in the felicity the young people enjoyed, in their mutual endearments to each other. I assure you, my dear friend, would he say, this attachment is highly flattering to my wishes, for I always thought your daughter the most accomplished young woman, in every sense of the word, I ever beheld; and my son justifies his sense, his taste, his morals, and his discretion, in fixing his affections upon her. I promise myself every consolation to my old age, from such a daughter; and hope, my *Bentley*, we may yet live many years, to witness to the rising virtues of a future generation. I too, sir, perhaps, may have a daughter in *France*, but my dear mistaken wife, I fear, by this time, has confirmed her bigotry too strongly to the church of *Rome*, and perhaps taught her to be indifferent about seeing her father any more. But, sir, many things must be suffered in this life, though they sting us most severely.

Mr. *Bentley* was a thinking man, he was persuaded of the good disposition of young *Fairfield*,
and

and was confirmed in an excellent opinion of his daughter; his wishes corresponded exactly with his friend's, respecting the future alliance, but he conceived it was as yet too early. He knew how far young people were subject to mistake, the strong impulses of a warm fancy for happiness, and to misconceive the prejudices of passion, for the result of judgment and deliberation. He was sensible the violent impetuosity of the heart, was too apt to mislead the head; and that engagements were often precipitately made, and contracts rashly concluded, from viewing objects through a flattering false medium, that frequently embittered the lives of the parties ever after. He thought that marriage was a most solemn obligation, and, in general, too trivially treated; he conceived the very notions of its restraint, often suggested a wish to be free from it; and that though two friends, whose deference for each other was discretionary, might maintain the strictest harmony through life, yet the human heart was too ready to revolt at the idea of a compulsive attachment. That the inconsistency and inconstancy of the human nature were general, in some degree, and that a self-knowledge, though always necessary, was seldom acquired too soon. He thought it possible the singular mode of the young man's education might, some future day, subject him to the greater temptations from the world, if curiosity should lead him to mix with it; and that in spite of all present good propensities, all the promises of a correct life, he might one day prove faithless to his education, and the precepts and examples that he then so cheerfully obeyed. His son too he weighed

weighed had frequently solicited his indulgence to see something of *London*, and as it was more than probable after his death, he might be tempted to mix with the multitude, without one friend to assist him, one counsellor to advise with, in case of any deviation from the right path he had so long pursued. He determined to propose to his friend *Fairfield*, deferring the intended marriage for at least a year longer, and in the mean time, to send the young gentlemen to converse a little with the manners of men, who inhabit the great city. If they incline to error, we may watch over them in the person of some faithful agent; and if we find them corrupting by the vices that surround them, we may recal, and convince them, before it is too late, of their danger. Young *Fairfield* will have every occasion, from the dissipation, the vanity, the confidence, the arts, the incorrectness, he will observe in ladies of polite life, to adhere more closely to my daughter; and the hypocrisy, the ceremony, the debauchery of the men, will drive them back to this retreat, with double prejudices in its favour. He resolved therefore to take the earliest opportunity of advising with his friend upon the subject; and as Mr. *Fairfield* soon after dropt in from a walk he had been taking round the meadows, he withdrew with him to the hermitage, and mentioned his proposal.

Though the old gentleman was unprepared for the argument of Mr. *Bentley*, his confidence in his prudence, determined him to acquiesce without delay, and the only difficulty that arose, was how

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to break the affair to the young lovers; this Mr. *Bentley* engaged to take upon himself, and the other gave him full power to act as he thought proper by his son. I have many friends in town, said he, to whose care I can commit them, and the sooner they go the better. Mr. *Fairfield* continued his walk, and Mr. *Bentley* sought his pupils. They were walking arm in arm, in a shady part of the garden. Master *Fairfield*, Master *Bentley*; Gentlemen, the evening is particularly tempting, I propose to make a longer excursion than usual, and shall consider your company as a favour. We will just step in and apologize to Miss *Bentley*, who I fancy is now preparing the tea-table, and then proceed upon our ramble.

C H A P. XXI.

THE charms of the country were uncommonly fine, and the young gentlemen in high spirit. The beauties of the spring were just confirmed, and the sun beginning to decline into the west, softened the severity of his beams. The yellow-hammers were whistling their wild notes on the hedges, and the mellow note of the black-bird, at a distance, faintly warbled in the air.

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The mowers had begun their toil, and the hay-makers sung cheerfully in the vallies. A clear blue sky reflected its azure beauties in the waters, and the zephyrs played about the poplar, and dwelt upon the fragrance of the hawthorn. A universal smile of joy diffused itself around, and Mr. *Bentley* and his companions visibly shared in it. After remarking the beauties of the scene before them, the old gentleman led to the eclairsissement as follows. I have something to communicate, gentlemen, to my young friends which perhaps, they little dream of; and have, with the permission of Mr. *Fairfield*, taken this opportunity to consult your approbation upon it. The respect you have ever shewn to my opinion, and the alacrity with which all my councils have been followed, makes me the more readily undertake to make a discovery, which, but for one circumstance, I am persuaded, would be particularly pleasing. My friend, Master *Fairfield*, has commissioned me to suggest to you, that it is our mutual wishes, that you will prepare for an early journey to London; you will be made acquainted with our motive for this procedure, and will, perhaps, more readily embrace our plan of conduct, as my sweet *William* here will attend you. It is not expected you should remain there above a year or two at farthest. You will, in the mean time, have every opportunity of corresponding with my daughter, and at the expiration of that term, you will be inseparably united. I value you, sir, as my own son, you are dear to me, and I should be sorry to give a moment's uneasiness to your bosom; but there are many reasons that influence the

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the opinions of parents, of the propriety of which, perhaps, their children cannot so well determine; and I know, sir, your sense of duty will always direct you to act wisely.

Young *Bentley* was overjoyed with the thoughts of seeing *London*, and *Fairfield* wiped away a few tears, that escaped him, and grasping Mr. *Bentley* by the hand, replied, You are very kind, sir, to express yourself so warmly in my favour, and to take such pains, as you have done, in declaring my father's will towards me. I thank you, sir, with my whole heart, and will always bear witness to your goodness. You justly suspect my love for Miss *Bentley*, will be a prevailing motive with me to wish a continuance in the country; but, sir, deeply as my affections are engaged, and ardently as I doat upon my *Betsy*; though the felicity of my days depend upon her presence, and my nights are spent in contemplating her virtues; though every emotion of my heart beats for that excellent young lady, and life itself would be indifferent without her: yet, with all these prepossessions, should my father command me never to see her more, as my soul liveth, I would obey him. Tho' the bittered sorrow would be my portion all the rest of my days, as my soul liveth, I'd obey him. I will teach my father, sir, to expect every obedience from his son, and shall prepare for *London*, or wherever else he pleases. I — I confess, sir, I am rather confused, sir,—a little unprepared for all this; but shall esteem it a favour, you will excuse my attendance upon you any farther, and suffer me to collect myself alone,
before

before I seek my father. Mr. *Bentley* smiling, assented, and as he walked with a quick step to a thick coppice near at hand, the winding path soon hid him from their view. When he had got some little way into the wood, he turned his head to see if he was observed, and pulling out his handkerchief in haste, indulged an agony of sorrow.

The thoughts of being separated from his *Betty*, endeared her doubly to his affections; and respecting the demands upon this sense, he was not determined about wisdom. He revolved in his mind a thousand little circumstances of past bliss, and perplexed himself with as many fears for the future. The possibility of an alteration of her sentiments towards him, in so long an absence as two years; the uncertainty of mortality, and all the various anxieties with which lovers studiously torment themselves, rushed violently upon his soul. He leaned his head upon his arm, and reclined against a beech-tree, and sobbed as if his heart was breaking; he would alternately lift up his swimming eyes to heaven, and then sunk down his head again; then folding his arms across his breast, indulged a luxury of sensation. He started on a sudden, he pressed his hand upon his forehead, paused, looked confusedly around him, put his handkerchief into his pocket, and briskly walked forwards. Again the sweet image of Miss *Bentley* swam before his sight, and he melted into softness as before.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, said he, when I am far, far distant, from this lovely spot, Miss *Bentley* may bless it with her presence. She may attend to the chirping of the grass-hoppers, and listen to the evening song of yonder linnet; the soft murmuring of that stock-dove may sooth her ear, when I am far away. The weary labourer returning at even, from the business of the field, may meet her on this very spot, and gaze with admiration on her beauties, and heedlessly destroy the impression of these footsteps I could worship with pleasure. Oh! Mr. *Bentley*, my honoured counsellor and friend, I am indebted to you for many valuable precepts, but you never taught me to deny the finer feelings of the man, or to be insensible to the perfections of your daughter. Again he proceeded forward with an irregular step, and his eyes were directed on the ground. Busied in these reflections on his mistress, he had nearly reached the extremity of the wood, before he recollected whither he was going; and turning reluctantly to the stile that led to the adjacent meadows, he sat upon it for some time, to contemplate the scene he was leaving. Perhaps, said he, sighing most profoundly, my papa's wisdom may make my departure necessary, and I may not visit these rural graces again for a long season. Then observing a seat of turf at the foot of a lofty elm, on which his *Betty* had often listened to his faithful story, Dear peaceful witness of my calmer hours, he said, sacred be your venerable shade for love and constancy, and truth and virtue, for ever and for ever. May no unhallowed step prophane your sweet asylum. May the smooth tongue of flattery and falsehood,

be

be never heard within thee, to violate the bounds of peace and joy. Here may spring produce the choicest garlands of her flowers. Here may summer shine with mildest lustre; around these fields may the fullest sheaves of autumn be scattered; and here may the bleak winds of winter be very pitiful and sparing of their power. He had insensibly reached the seat, and sat down in a meditative posture upon it. In that moment he questioned the consistency of his father's character. He conceived it possible he had been flattered in his illness, with a political approbation of his passion, and that as the purposes of health were answered, some new measures had been concerted against him. Perhaps, said he, it is expected that an absence of two years, will separate my affections from Miss Bentley; and, perhaps, it is thought expedient to part us for ever; and, perhaps, she is destined for some happier man; but if that be possible, dropping down on both knees upon the grass, and fervently clasping his hands together; if that be possible, if any tender assiduity can be forgotten, and some more favoured rival be preferred in my stead, may the eternal blessing of the Almighty be the portion of both of them: but as for me, if ever I forget my fidelity to that incomparable creature, may the smiles of heaven forsake me, and may I no longer be remembered by its mercies. Here a violent flood of sorrow came again to his relief, and his handkerchief was steeped in tears.

C H A P. XXII.

IF this seat was particularly pleasing to young *Fairfield*, it was no less so to Miss *Bentley*. Before the morning dew had dissipated, she sought it, and before the shadow of the evening had lengthened, she would retire to it, to indulge the tender emotion of her passion. It happened that evening she bent her footsteps towards it. She delighted to sit there, and think upon the goodness of her *Edward*. She beheld at some little distance the man of her heart, and she beheld the agitation of his soul; she paused, and waited for the issue; she heard him speak tenderly in her favour, and suspected something extraordinary had happened to perplex him. Her bosom took the alarm, tears trickled down her cheeks, and she could contain herself no longer. The rustling of the leaves alarm the young gentleman. He started in an instant, and beheld the charmer of his soul before him. My dear, dear *Betsy*, was all he could utter, and springing forwards he caught her that moment in his arms. Miss *Betsy* returned the ardour of his embrace, and a silence of many minutes ensued; they gazed with unspeakable fondness at each other; they both attempted to speak, but found no language but their tears. At length *Fairfield* recovering his voice a little, and pressing her most warmly to his panting bosom, My sweet *Betsy*,

Betsy, we must, we must, we must part, and part, perhaps, for ever! The roses forsook her cheeks in a moment, and she sunk fainting into his arms. He no longer thought any thing of his own sorrow, but centered all his solicitude in the object before him; he conveyed her with tenderness to the seat, laid his warm cheek upon her cold one, hung over her with inexpressible anxiety, called her affectionately by her name, and dropped down motionless beside her.

Mr. *Bentley* and his son, who were returning through the wood, in their way home, beheld with surprize the situation of the lovers, and instantly hastened to their assistance. The old gentleman applied his smelling-bottle to his daughter, and his son was relieving his friend; after some time Miss *Betsy* began to recover, and opening her eyes, enquired the meaning of her situation; then looking languishingly at her lover, she blushed, and grew pale alternately, hung down her head, trembled, and again relapsed into a swoon.

Poor Mr. *Bentley* was alarmed, a conflict of passions seized him; his knees smote each other, his hand trembled, and his heart failed him at that moment. He felt for a pulse, but found none. He chafed her temples, but all in vain; he looked wildly about him, and fell prostrate on the ground. Gracious heaven! deliver me, deliver me, he said; deliver me from distraction and from death: save me! O save my dear, my darling daughter, or all is over with the old man; and this must be his last petition. On the bare earth he pressed his forehead,

forehead, and melted with misery and was dumb. In the mean time his son had restored his friend, and their united efforts had again recovered his daughter. They raised the old gentleman on his feet, and led him tenderly towards her. The violence of his pleasure was unutterable; love, gratitude and joy at once overwhelmed him. My child, my child lives, he cried, and shall again be happy. Oh! my children, little did I expect this, but I guess the cause, and will remove your fears for ever. Master *Fairfield*, rest assured, sir, no measures shall be taken for your departure, which it seems is so contrary to your inclination. You may trust to my influence with your father for his consent. You forfeit no good opinion of mine by this conflict. I reverence your tender heart, your susceptible disposition, and will never more alarm it, by a prospect of a separation from my daughter. These sounds were cordials to the young people, and after a mutual exchange of tender caresses, young *Fairfield* proceeded for his father's, and Miss *Bentley*, leaning upon her brother's arm, sought their peaceful fire-side.

C H A P. XXIII.

YOUNG Bentley had been particularly happy in the prospect of seeing *London*; he had been during the walk inquisitive with his father, to explain to him many things respecting the ways of it, and pressed him to appoint an early day. I shall have an opportunity of communicating to you, sir, my sentiments on the novelty of the scene about me, and I know you will honour me with your correspondence, and make my absence from you as little irksome as possible. He was full of these thoughts, when the situation of his friend and sister surprized him, and though he would have relinquished many darling pleasures to make them happy, he was not prepared for so sudden a disappointment of his favourite excursion, and determined to prevail on his friend, if possible, to make a discretionary tour for a few weeks, if he could not be prevailed on for more. He had soon an opportunity of conversing with his friend on the subject; and as the young gentleman had long desired to see *London*, he found no difficulty in persuading him to consent to the journey: they relied on the kindness of their fathers, and proposed setting out in a fortnight at farthest. If I find, said *Fairfield*, a few weeks absence from your sister unsupportable, you will indulge me with an immediate return; but if a month or two can be endured,

endured, depend upon my alacrity to attend you the whole time. They acquainted the young lady with their scheme, and received her smile of approbation; and as the old gentlemen conceived a very little acquaintance with the great world is sufficient to make a wise man sick of it, they made no hesitation about their consent, and every thing was got ready for their journey. The lovers employed their time in planning little amusements to employ themselves in their absence from each other, and promised themselves uncommon rapture, when they should meet again.

Mr. *Bentley* knew something of the human heart, and suspected that the engagements of the great city might take a stronger hold on their young minds, than they seemed to be aware of; however, he resolved to trust to the event, and permit them to set forward, as soon as they thought proper. He determined, however, to give them the best counsel in his power, before they left him, and the rest he left to the great disposer of all things.

A few evenings before their departure, he called his children and young *Fairfield* about him, and addressed them in the following manner.

C H A P. XXIV.

THOUGH we are about to part only for a few weeks, mortality is more than a lesson, and it is possible this may be the last instruction you may ever receive from me. I shall be faithful to the charge of my friend, and faithful to the conscience within me. I shall not confine myself, sirs, to the circumstances of your present journey altogether, but endeavour to explain to you some things, which, if remembered, may do you service, in your future conversation with mankind.

In that proud city you are seeking, you will be tempted to neglect every advantage of time, and every interest of eternity. You will be tempted to depart from the religion of your fathers, to swerve from the maxims of morality, the doctrines of truth, and the lessons of humility, I have been so carefully inculcating in your minds. A broad volume of vice will be displayed before you; your passions will be inflamed with a thousand specious temptations; and you will be subject to corruptions from every quarter, from which your sense shall not be sufficient to save you. You will observe among the rich, a pride, a luxury, a dissipation, a profligate licentiousness of man-

manners ; among the poor, a general emulation to imitate the follies and the faults of those above them. You will find, as *Shakespear* says, *The peasant treads closely on the noble's heel*. Among the learned and the liberal, as they stile themselves, you will witness to the most despicable narrow contentions. You will see men of sense fighting for shadows, and the wise weeping for a straw. You will be in danger of seduction from the ignorance of learning, the deformity of beauty, the poison of the glass, and the dulness of witty conversation. I will explain these paradoxes as I go along.

You are going into a world, where such men as *Hobbes*, *Bolingbroke*, and *Chubb*, have been before you ; you will find in the libraries of the learned, casuists that explain away the letter and spirit of the gospel ; sceptics that deny its truths, and infidels who hold them in derision. You will find contenders for the dignity of degraded reason, and the beauty of moral virtue, who yet deny the immortality of the soul, and reduce the boasted nobility of their nature, to a level with the brutes that perish.

The pride of propagating strange creeds, and departing from the prejudices of the vulgar, has filled the world with all the variety of opinions that confound it. This has induced men of the meanest capacities, and most confined views, to vindicate what they are taught from books ; to believe is a discretionary agency in man ; and to pursue the wildest chimeras of their own

fancy, for an infallible criterion of reason. The ignorant always conceive they maintain the privileges of a liberal education, by peremptory decisions on questions, about which the world may be generally divided. They pay an implicit reverence to their own ipse dixits, and doubt of the understanding of every man, who differs but minutely from themselves. They have an argument in the notional dignity of their reason, which always supports them through the most palpable contradictions ; and they will tell you, that though it may be political to profess a public regard for such opinions, as relate to a future existence, a day of judgment, an heaven, and an hell, to awe the multitude, and promote the purposes of civil society ; yet they must ever consider themselves at liberty to indulge their own thoughts in the closet, and there they conceive, that the more liberally they think, the better. Such men consider a conversation with books to be wisdom, and superficial philosophy to be learning. They are ignorant in the worst sense of the word, and I guard you to avoid their reveries, as you value your soul's health,, and wish for that peace which passeth understanding. While I was in the city, I had many opportunities of witnessing to the regular dullness of these specious enquirers, these visionary respecters of their own darkness.

I was once introduced to a mechanical wit of this cast, who was nursing a child about a year old, by the fire-side, in the centre of a vast pile of dusty volumes. He had written a book of sentences

ces with his own hand, and imagined I should expect something extraordinary from him. He was very extraordinary, indeed, for instead of the vulgar lullabies of common nurses, he talked to it of the axioms of *Boyle*, and the elements of *Euclid*; and as he dandled it on his knee, and danced it in his arms, he would most learnedly descant upon the squaring of the circle, the divisibility of matter, the principles of the air-pump, and the power of a perpetual motion. You must pity such men, they are too contemptible for laughter.

C H A P. XXV.

I Recommend to you, in every circumstance of life, to keep as independant of yourselves as possible. Be cautious how you suffer a love of company to lead you into indiscriminate societies; and to call off the mind from every attention that becomes it.

Men who look for pleasure from the conversation of the croud, are seldom reconciled to themselves in solitude, and you will find it wiser to cultivate a good correspondence with your own hearts, than trust to a temporary entertainment

with occasional companions. We contract all our worst habits from the prejudices of custom, or the mistakes of the world; and the less a man associates with the croud, the less he will be informed of its follies. I by no means recommend a cynical reserve, a contemptuous indifference, an unsocial silence when appealed to; but mean that you should be very circumspect in chusing your acquaintance; that the number of them be confined to a small sensible circle; and that though you take a pleasure in their company, not to make your happiness slavishly depend upon them. If you accustom yourselves properly to divide your day, by a round of useful duties, innocent amusements, and instructive applications, you will find your hours dance chearfully along, and your moments will very seldom be languid. You will learn, in the language of Dr. Young, "to meet your naked hearts alone;" and agree with the same author in this animated apostrophe:

*O lost to reason, lost to manly thought!
Lost to the nobler sallies of the soul,
Who think it solitude to be alone.*

I knew men whose sense I highly respected, and whose tempers did honour to humanity; who, for want of regulating their lives by some such rules as I have prescribed to you, were compelled to live continually, as I may so express it, at a dangerous distance from themselves. From an early attachment to society, they had few opportunities of self-examination, till reflection, like a patient creditor, came upon them with an additional charge, and drove them more constantly

ly to company to avoid it. They have surprized me when complaining of their health, and affecting an ignorance of the cause, to think men of the strictest understanding could be so studious to pass a cheat upon themselves, in a concern of the last moment. With what concern have I remarked an excessive indulgence of the bottle, at the expence of constitution, judgment, the good opinion of sensible men, the ease of relations, and every thing that ought to be valued! But remember, my dears, a studied insensibility may and must miscarry, and there is such a thing as midnight solitude, and such men must meet it as they can.

What a strange state of felicity must his be, who depends solely on the bottle! In every emergency of care he flies to the bottle. In every moment of languor he constantly consults his bottle; and when reflection presses hard on him, he is ready to say to his bottle, in the language of a sinking apostle, "Save me, save me, or I perish."

You will frequently find, if you suffer yourself to associate with the intemperate, some mean artful spirits capable of affecting an extraordinary vivacity, to betray you into a ridiculous situation, and then, perhaps, will prove themselves every way capable, after having been the means of your disgrace, to draw the criticisms of the room upon it.

You will promise yourselves something from the lively sallies of the Choice Spirits, but there you

will be miserably mistaken. You will find among them an excess of stupidity, disguised by an awkward brilliancy of expression; their great forte consists in punning upon words, and deviating from decency as far as possible. They say any thing for the sake of the saying, and secure the applause of the room on terms, that would cover a plain man's face with blushes.

C H A P. XXVI.

YOU have read how the wise *Spartans* taught their children sobriety, by exposing their drunken slaves before them. In *London* grave citizens debauch their children themselves; and you will observe in every particular the reverse of that judicious system of honest manners, which distinguished the *Lacedemonian* polity.

So universal is the love of gluttony and feasting, that you will be ready to conceive, that man was endowed with an immortal thinking mind, only to invent high-flavoured sauces, and consult what dishes are most pleasing to his palate; a luxury of invention is employed to banish plain
viands

viands from their tables, and the most pernicious composition of strong wines, and destructive spices, substituted in their stead. Inhospitable men! they poison their guests, and think they do them a favour. When the business of a parish is to be settled, a public feast is provided; when the bounds of a district are to be determined, a public feast is provided; when the livery attend upon their mayor, a public feast is provided; and when the governors of public charities meet together, public feasts are provided. In short, nothing is celebrated, nothing is performed; there is no loyalty, no patriotism, no public spirit, no charity, no harmony, unless public feasts be provided. These public feasts constantly begin with gluttony, proceed with drunkenness, and end in riot and confusion. The father of a family reeling home from his debauch, is seduced by the courtesan to the house of ill-fame, which his son, perhaps, had left a few moments before him.

O my children! let me conjure you, by all the maxims I have taught you, if your future lot should mix you with such men, to avoid their miserable infatuations.

When you are invited to the tables of the polite, expect nothing but unsocial ceremonies, unmeaning professions, contemptible forms, and a stupid confinement of behaviour. The great art to make yourselves agreeable, is merely to toast beauties you never saw, and great men you never heard of; to admire something in the mistress of the house, and to gratify the vanity of her daughter:
you

you may say as much as you please without thinking, but depend upon it, if you adhere to truth and propriety, you will be disqualified altogether.

Conversation generally turns on questions of little moment, and which an ingenious mind might either defend or confute, with equal success and advantage. If you are called upon to engage in a dispute, weigh well this circumstance before you begin; and if you find the subject immaterial in itself, be very cautious how you suffer your prejudice or your pride to get the better of your candour; be always prepared for a defeat, and indifferent about the positiveness of your adversary. Do not despise his opinion, because it differs from your own; but content yourself with conceiving, you had considered the object through different mediums, and that it is possible both may be right in part, and that both may have been equally mistaken. You will have every advantage over the confident, and at the time they are ready to cry victory! victory! your candour will rob them of a triumph.

Politics lay generally the foundation for a strong bias, and illiberal controversy; and you will act wisely always to be indifferent about parties. Be ready to serve your country when there may be occasion, but do not suffer your senses to be insulted by any public impostor whatever.

You know my sentiments respecting books, and I again earnestly advise you to avoid the libraries of the learned; confine yourselves to moral entertainment,

tertainment, history and the best poets, but meddle not with commentators in divinity, as you wish salvation to your souls. They are dangerous, they are doubtful.

Leave *Grotius* and *Puffendorf* to regulate the laws of nations, and if you are inclined to envy the respect paid to their authorities, hear the declaration the former made on his death-bed. After all the learning he had displayed, all the volumes he had written, *that his whole life had been spent in busy idleness*, unworthy the scholar and the man. Sir *Isaac Newton's* Principia has, perhaps, rather informed the world, than served it; and, perhaps, it may be said with equal truth, that all the discoveries which have been made by scientific men, rather amuse the mind, and shew its power, than tend to correct the heart, and mend the manners of the people. The wisdom of the heart, first, is seldom taught in schools; yet you shall find that to be the only true wisdom, in the day when the sun shall start from its sphere, and the pillars of creation tremble. You will, perhaps, one day conceive, my dears, I have confined your educations, by keeping from you a knowledge of the languages; but when you are inclined to censure my mistakes, ask yourselves, of what utility is *Greek* and *Latin*, but for schoolmen and lawyers to shew their pedantry; physicians, to disguise their prescriptions; and apothecaries, to scrawl labels upon gallipots? Believe me, first, our scholars are, in general, the dullest of dull men; because a persuasion of school consequence, keeps them

them from all self-knowledge; they contract a miserable narrowness of opinion, and pronounce all men blockheads, who have not been classically educated like themselves. Let these consequential men inform me, what they have collected from the odes of *Horace* and *Anacreon*, that should so exalt them above the croud; or let them inform me, what advantage can be derived from a conversation with the ancients, that the moderns are not possessed of already. Let them waste their lamps in midnight studies, and emaciate their bodies by the application of their minds; and let them have fame for their fortunes: but remember, a very little learning is sufficient to make a good man, and that all the knowledge of *Greece* and *Rome*, will never vindicate a bad one.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXVII.

YOU will find a general affectation of language in public speakers, which betrays a want of argument in themselves, and insults the sense of every man who hears them. They will spin out an oration at the bar, or a sermon in the pulpit, to an hour's length, the substance of which might be collected in ten lines, and delivered in as many minutes. I will instance some of their arts, to teach you it is contemptible and unworthy.

A certain orator, who, in my day, used to read lectures upon eloquence to the ladies and their lap-dogs, speaking of a tree, went on as follows: the root, the trunk, the bark, the body, the sap, the branches, the buds, the leaves, the blossoms, and the fruit. By which means, he took up so much time in wire-drawing four letters, that the audience forgot the connection of the last sentence, and the gentleman had the liberty of taking an abrupt leave of his subject, and proceed upon another head, without injuring his oration.

I remember to have sat under a preacher, whose private character, I am well informed, was a very
correct

correct one, who injured the influence of his example, by the obscurity and languor of his precept; by an affectation of originality, and an unnatural attention to language, while the business of his discourse stood still. When speaking once of the prophecy of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, instead of dwelling upon the horrors of such a visitation, in a rational, alarming way, he attempted to entertain his audience by a poetical picture. Her proud palaces, her lofty domes, her stately edifices, her glorious temples, her strong battlements, were to be laid low, and the sound of merry minstrelsy to be heard within her no more.

Now let me caution you against being surprized at such preaching, it may please the ear, it may win the passions; but how will your follies be reformed, your piety established, or your judgment informed? And remember it is a sure sign, either of want of abilities, or a want of seriousness, in supporting the great cause, the preacher is intrusted to the care of. Let your speaking and writing be free from superfluous studied expressions. If a meaning can be conveyed in three plain words, study not to use four; and respecting what is called eloquence, leave others to water that garden, and gather the fruits of it, when they have done.

You will have the most melancholy picture of the weakness and misery of mortality constantly before you. You will see miserable wretches of threescore, stooping beneath the weight of wealth; accumulating, by the most aggravated oppressions,

oppressions on the poor, an increase of affliction on themselves; lost to every thing, but their farms, and their merchandizes, their contracts, and their gains: each returning sun that rises on their pale nocturnal vigils, lights them to additional care, to harrow up their spirits within them. They monopolize the bounties of heaven, and shut their granaries from the poor that are pining in the streets, and yet talk of honesty, of justice. Insolent slaves! they dare to censure the highwayman and the house-breaker, and call murder an enormity! But the arm of heaven is not shortened, and visibly visits for these things.

I warn you to beware of wealth, or be content to bid adieu to felicity for ever. The compilers of our litany have wisely connected it in one petition with the most solemn circumstances that can attend us: "In all time of our tribulation, in all time of *our wealth*, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

You will find as you advance to age, when the warm impetuosities of youth are forgotten, avarice, like a viper, will be creeping to your bosom, and it will demand every effort of your reason to oppose its insinuating progress. It preys perpetually on peace, like a vulture gnawing at the vitals. It freezes up the warm blood about the heart, and makes the gall continually overflow. It destroys every tender, every rational, every laudable emotion of the man; the affections bow down before it; and it contracts the powers of the mind to nothing. It fast bars the gates of heaven eternally,

nally, and kindles hell within the centre of the soul. It allows no rest for the sole of the foot by day, nor for the temples on the pillow by night, and makes existence the greatest of all curses. Say unto wisdom, sirs, thou art my sister, and think carefully of these things.

The little advantage of fortune providence has blessed you with, employ like political stewards, for the benefit of the poor and needy. Water the dry ground. As it will ever become you to inform the ignorant by your counsel, so will the calamities of the poor have always a claim upon your purses. Chear the drooping children of modest merit, who conceal their sorrows in the shade, and rather patronize men of want, than men of genius. Be not indiscriminately liberal, but secure a constant fund for the benefit of future claimants. You will find the street abounding with beggars, who prefer a precarious subsistence to the care of their parishes, and you will be told, they are no objects of distress, but vagrants according to law; but let not the pleas of sordid minds excuse you from distributing a few pence, for remember the love of freedom is a universal passion, and perhaps in their situation you might do the same. And trust me, young men, I give you a profound lesson of consummate wisdom, when I conjure you to despise money.

Be ever chearful to do the strictest justice to the minutest graces in other men, and think, and speak tenderly of their most capital errors. Consider how far the want of education, the bad examples

amples of parents, the profligacy of young companions, train the inconsiderate to violate the laws of their country, and to forfeit their lives for the crime. Commiserate the hardness of the bad man's heart, and let your pity follow the obdurate felon to the gallows.

If you wish to be wise, you will be humble, very humble: you will lead the blind tenderly by the hand, and ease the weary traveller of his burden. A sense of your own insufficiency will teach you to allow for all the deficiencies of others, and you will reverence honesty in rags, and will call every man your brother: so shall you never be mortified by the ill-natured reflections of the world, nor be inclined to reflect on it in return. If you are meek yourselves, you will consider it becoming to discountenance the arrogance of others. You will respect only intrinsic dignity, and pay no superstitious regard for the fur gown of an alderman, the garter of a peer, or the trappings of a king. You will vindicate the superior excellency of the soul, that portion of divinity which blazes as strong in the bosom of the beggar as in the princes of the earth, the mighty rulers of the nations. Never, I intreat you, let your sense be awed by superfluous appendages of the man, but weigh his virtues in the true balance, and judge of him by his intrinsic perfections. Feed not the insolent vanity of the rich; gratify not the fancied superiority of the proud; yield not to the nominal character of any; but divest all of their external recommendations, and judge freely without distinction of every one who is
deficient

deficient in real merit: Be humble without meanness; be correct without pride; be zealous without bigotry; be spirited without resentment.

C H A P. XXVIII.

AVOID idleness, as you would escape perdition; she is the mother of all immorality and prophaneness, and the cause of more corruptions than can be enumerated in many volumes. Men of fortune are her particular votaries and slaves; they make every valuable sacrifice at her shrine, and court her with the blindest devotion. She classes the nobleman and the pick-pocket together, and leads men of the first public stations in the kingdom to associate with the vilest reptiles in the land. She teaches her scholars to devote all their talents and time to rattling of square pieces of ivory and shuffling of painted paste-boards, distinguished by dice and cards. They will risque an estate upon the valour of a game-cock, or the fleetness of a courser, and stake as much upon the crawling of a vile maggot on a table, the trickling of a drop of rain down the window-sash, or the drawing of a straw from the thatch of an hovel,

as will keep a large family of pining poor for one year, and very frequently for seven. Yet, in all this time, their honest industrious tradesmen are sacrificing, from the largeness of their debts, and the length of their credit, while their mistresses are riotting upon the wreck of their fortunes. Yet these unaccountable men talk of the antiquity of their titles, talk of the dignity of their blood, pride them on the honour of their ancestors, when they have no honour, no character of their own.

My dear rational young friends, you have immortal spirits to provide for; you are travelling very fast for eternity, and stand each doubtful moment on the brink of the cold grave. You are accountable to heaven, to society and yourselves, for the employment of every hour of your time; and you will essentially serve yourselves by serving others, and not suffering your hours to be negligently wasted away.

In the great city you will be shocked at the inequality of those wise laws, on which *Englishmen* so particularly pride themselves. You will see the most horrid oppressions, might trampling upon right, the beam of justice biased by the strong hand of power. The inns of court swarm with litigious mercenaries, who set society together by the ears, and prey upon their properties when they have done. Be cautious how you listen to their councils, and rather renounce a small legal claim, than secure the certain loss of gaining a victory over your adversary.

If

If you are inclined to be languid or insensible of the advantages of your situation in life, turn your thoughts to the many thousand wretched objects that are languishing in hospitals, that pine in prison houses, that groan in dungeons, and perish in the streets continually. Think how many are gasping on a sick bed, or sinking in the great deep; how many are buried in mines, and court death with earnest solicitation. These reflections will rouse you; they will awaken you to a sense of your own happiness, and stimulate you to adore that good providence, who has so graciously distinguished you, by a great multitude of its mercies.

C H A P. XXIX.

YOU will have every temptation to be carried with the stream, in pursuit of public amusement. The play-house, the opera, the midnight masquerade, and many other fashionable entertainments, lead the young of both sexes to every excess of dissipation; where health is sacrificed, and sense neglected; where morals are perverted, and characters destroyed; where the precept of the parent

rent is despised, and the lesson of the tutor forgotten. I have a positive opinion of your discretion, and will trust you to consult a moderation and prudence, in every pursuit of your lives. I will admit you may indulge yourselves with some degree of these kind of amusements, with entire safety; but remember, if a misconduct succeeds, you were studious to tempt temptation.

Let your dress never be subject to the capricious vicissitudes of fashion; for by dress you will observe all orders of men reversed, and all ages confounded together. I have seen clergymen in their canonicals with jockey hats, and grave citizens in pig-tails; mechanics appear like dancing-masters, and their wives like ladies of pleasure; tinmen may wear bag-wigs, and barbers flourish in the politest assemblies, with sword-knots and solitaires. The mother of a family, grown bald with years, will carry a weighty composition of hair, paste, powder and pomatum; and the young fop, her son, sustains an immense collection of the same materials on his shoulders. The coxcomical 'prentice struts with his gold-headed cane, his scented handkerchief, and his snuff-box, while his master groans beneath a weight of metal buttons, and the dimensions of a wig that envelope him.

There is no consistency in fashion; you may one day be called upon to wrap your neck in large bandages of cambric, and the next a small stock may supply its place; to-day a long waistcoat shall be the pinnacle of the mode, and to-morrow it

it must give place to some newer fashion. The alteration of a sleeve is considered a matter of the greatest moment; and yet when, in obedience to foolish taste, you have complied with all this, some new mode instantly starts up, and you are frightful, you are hideous. How contemptible is such inconstancy, in what is called fashion! They argue the benefit of trade, and I do not object to men of fortune changing their coats often; but why must they so often vary the shape of them, or dwell so much on things of no moment. Gentlemen, consult decency always, avoid formality always; but do not be the ridiculous dupes of those insignificant puppies, who prescribe to others that dress, which they think best becoming in themselves: it is abominable, gentlemen, to think how much attention is paid in *London*, to the sorry article of cloathing, by creatures who are all candidates for a shroud. Avoid it, as you are wise young men; avoid it, and attend to things of greater concern.

There are certain words in use with retailers of small talk in *London*; such as *taste*, *virtù*, *critique*, *connoisseur*, *beaux esprits*, and *belles lettres*, &c. these are seldom employed, but to express something uncommon, and for that reason it rarely happens, that common sense has any thing to do with them. For instance, should some great genius, by six months close application and hard study, produce a tooth-pick, or a smelling-bottle, on a new construction, he would be directly set down for a man of *taste*; but should this great creature scamper twenty miles over hedge and ditch,

ditch, in pursuit of a butterfly, it would be more than taste, it would be positively *virtù*. Should he condescend to sit in judgment on every new play that is acted, and every literary composition the press teems with, he would, without hesitation, be pronounced a learned *critique*; and infallibly secure the character of a profound *connoisseur*, by distinguishing graces in painting that are not to be found, and dwelling upon deformities that never existed. It is very rare to meet so many strong lines of perfection in one character; but should this same great man be qualified to talk bawdry, without stammering over his fourth bottle, or to write an elegy on a lady's lap-dog, no body will be so insensible as to deny that he is perfectly one of the *beaux esprits*, and has a strong knowledge of the *belles lettres*. I have something to say to you respecting the ladies (my dear *Betsy* will be jealous of the honour of her sex, and may retire if she pleases.) The ladies of *London* are fair and very faulty; their education, in the general, is uniformly false, and their notions of consistency almost as generally mistaken. Their sense matures much sooner than that of our sex, and their ideas of a qualification to judge for themselves, in points of moment, betray them much sooner in life into a false opinion of their own power, and a confidence in their own weakness; they labour, early in life, under every disadvantage; the partial mother lays the foundation for that vanity, the chamber-maid as constantly increases, and the lover as certainly confirms. Miss is no sooner arrived at her teens, but vivacity is encouraged for wit, and a fortunate pertness of remark,

remark, is misconstrued for a strength of understanding. She associates with girls of her own age, equally giddy with herself, and employs all her attention upon the milliner, the hair-dresser, the dancing-master, the flatterer, and the fashions. Her young companions teach her to ridicule a man of sense, and call him formal; teach her to despise the language of truth, and call it dullness; teach her to admire the ignorance of a fop, and call it charming; in short, teach her to neglect every amiable qualification she is mistress of, and call it gaiety, politeness, and pleasure. Their conversation is confined to cards and trifles; a little poetry and a very little *French*; a little sentiment and a very little reason. I am far from intimating they are incapable of better information; I reverence the natural susceptibility of my country-women, as much as I admire their beauties; I object not to the capacities of their minds, but the errors of their education. I know many of the sex are as distinguishable for the graces of their understanding, as for the lovely elegance of their forms, or the sweet symmetry of their features; but I have often lamented, that the generality are not sufficiently political, in improving the advantages of their persons, by the more lasting accomplishments of the mind.

In conversation they grievously tax the judgment of men of sense, and demand from them the most ridiculous indulgence to the weakness of their humours; they fancy a sovereignty in the power of their charms; they fancy a security in the pride of their reason; but too frequently and too
fatally

fatally experience, that beauty is a blossom, and wisdom is vain, and that ruin too constantly attends them.

My dear friends, what melancholy proofs of the deformity of vice, and extremity of misery, do the streets of *London* display! Each night the unhappy daughters of infamy and seduction swarm in every avenue of the metropolis; their beauty humbled in the dust, and all their vanity laid low. Pointed at by their own sex, and ill-treated by ours, they seem to consider themselves deserted of heaven and the world, and plunge into every excess of destruction, an horrid despondency can lead to. How many fair forms, fashioned in the finest mould of symmetry and perfection, who have been nursed in the softest lap of delicacy, whose infant hours have been watched over with the strictest assiduity and tenderness, stretched upon the cold pavement, and perishing with famine, petition some shelter from the midnight tempest; yet find no hand to help, no heart to pity them! Oh! think ye, what must they suffer from the heavy hand of affliction, whose prosperity is wretchedness in the extreme. They fly to wine for an asylum from reflection; they fly to company for a refuge from themselves. Lost to every shadow of virtue, every dawning of repentance, they studiously consult the ruin of our sex, that first degraded them, and think of penitence no more. My much loved pupils, if you think seriously of this melancholy picture, it is impossible you should hold the least commerce with the deceiver, or be yourselves deceivers. I will now particularly address me to my son.

C H A P. XXX.

MASTER *Bentley*! fir, your young fufceptible heart has hitherto efaped every emotion of the tender paffion; but the day may come, when you will acknowledge the power of the blind divinity, and worfhip devoutly at his fhrine. Let me therefore, fir, give you a few cautions. Never fuffer your affections to be abfolutely engaged, before your judgment is coolly confulted. Guard againft the fuperficial accomplifhments of a face, and look deeply into the intrinsic excellencies of the mind. Prefer a fine temper to a fine fortune, and make beauty an inferior confideration. Keep from the affectation of prudes, the levity of coquets, the fententioufnefs of book-learned women. Expect from matrimony much reafon, but no rapture; *and chufe a wife, that you may educate yourfelf.* Deliberately examine the minutiae of her difpofition at home and abroad, her converfation in private, her conduct to relations, her behaviour to fervants, her treatment of the poor. Flatter no foibles. Be free to correct every miftake, and treat her with the fidelity of a tender friendfhip, the generofity of a ftrict candour. Above all things, be circumfpect that her devotion is zealous, not mechanical, and that fhe fets a religious example to all about her. Teach her, in drefs, to obferve a decent elegant exactnefs, rather than a modifh variety; to avoid as much as poffible

fible all egotism and personality in discourse; to be cheerfully entertaining and instructive; to consult the strictest harmony, and to recommend a general distant politeness to every member of her little household. Instruct her to educate her children by her eye, and to demand from them a uniform respectful obedience. Let her commands to servants be executed with silent alacrity, and equal decorum; and let your table be frugal with strict hospitality, and plentiful with perfect prudence. Your own sense will suggest much more. These are some brief heads of advice which I offer with a persuasion of doing you service. Many years of my life have been spent, in giving you my sentiments respecting the more material article of religion: I need not dwell upon it here. There are many minute charges I could plead upon, but conceive what I have said will be sufficient. If you observe that, you will be just; you will be generous, you will be humble, you will be devout, and live superior to the common maxims of the world. You will forgive great injuries from others, sooner than forgive yourself the smallest injury done them. You will not be meanly superstitious, nor weakly credulous in your dealings with society. You will be patient in adversity, and consistent in prosperity; you will serve God zealously; honour the king faithfully; and love your neighbour as yourself, and be happy.

In this manner did Mr. *Bentley* constantly instruct the young men, till the evening preceding their departure.

After describing the tender conflict of the two lovers in the wood, it will be superfluous to dwell upon the particulars of their parting. Suffice it therefore to say, it was mutually affectionate, an eternal constancy was agreed upon on both sides, a future constant correspondence by letter proposed in absence, and they anticipated the pleasure of meeting again. They embraced tenderly, and wept; and wept, and embraced again; and as *Fairfield* was giving his last salute, Miss *Betsy* squeezed him gently by the hand, and looking affectionately in his face, said, "Remember, sir, you carry with you the heart of this plain girl before you, and if it be possible for you ever to be neglectful of so tender a charge, it will inevitably be broken. May the blessings of the Almighty be with you, wherever you are, and may you return with double prejudices in favour of this spot, and every thing about it." The young gentlemen particularly thanked Mr. *Bentley*, for the kind cautions he had instilled into them, and promised to keep his lesson as a lively law for their conduct, and to submit all their proceedings in *London* to his constant inspection. Their parting was particularly pathetic, the sensibility of all the parties operating together; indeed Mr. *Bentley* was almost inconsolable in the prospect of their taking so distant a journey, and to such a scene; however, he made the best use of his reason, and smothered half his feelings, though the other half flowed plentifully at his eyes. He accompanied them to the coach at *Carmarthen*, and, after many cordial caresses, took his leave, and saw the
stage

stage proceeding fast for *London*. He stopped at some little distance from the inn, and followed the vehicle with his eye: his emotions were uncommonly poignant at that instant; he felt an undescribable objection to their journey, and would have given much to have had them restored to him; but it was too late, and he proceeded slowly homeward, to console his daughter in their absence.

C H A P. XXXI.

AS Mr. *Coachman* generally compliments his cattle at first setting out with a smack of his whipcord extraordinary, our young travellers were soon out of sight, and the novelty of every thing about them reconciled them to their new situation. Nothing material happened to retard their journey, till they arrived within a few miles of *Gloucester*, when one of the springs giving way, the travellers were obliged to proceed on foot, while the coach went forward to get repaired. Our young friends walked arm in arm together, and were listening to the sweet melody of birds, and admiring the beauties of the country, when they perceived a man at a small distance, who was

singing merrily before them. He carried a small bundle of linen with an hazel stick upon his shoulders, and was playing with a little dog that frisked about him. Sometimes he would rub his hands joyfully together, and mend his pace; then whistle a fresh tune, and dance carelessly along. As he perceived the young gentlemen behind him, he stopped short, and civilly saluting them, requested the favour of their company; and as the good-natured affability that appeared in his face particularly pleased them, they made no hesitation in complying. "Gentlemen, said he, by the credit of my family, I don't think you will find an happier man than *Tom Caxon* in the three kingdoms. A penny-worth of warm purl, which I got just now at the Plough yonder, has comforted me amazingly, and I think I never was in better humour with myself and all mankind, than at this instant. As we have some way to walk, and have no particular engagements on our hands, suppose, gentlemen, I treat you with a few choice anecdotes of my life, to pass away the time." They consenting, he began. "Tho' it is customary with all great men, who are about to give some account of their lives and memoirs, to trace back their ancestry as many centuries as they are able; yet, sirs, the incorrectness of parish registers furnishes me with a very sufficient excuse for confining my relation to my immediate father, Mr. *Ephraim Caxon*, who was regularly trained to the razor and comb, and had the honour to carry a wig-box in the reign of *George the Second*. I shall only observe, respecting my mama, that she was the

the daughter of her mother, who had taken such pious pains with her education, that she could make a pudding without a written receipt, and, what is very remarkable, could toast a welch-rabbit in very great perfection, by the mere light of her understanding. Thus descended, you will guess I had every capital advantage of birth, parentage, education, &c. Indeed, I very early in life displayed a supernatural force of genius, for having once fallen asleep, and dropt my hand against the candle, I withdrew it of my own accord, without a single soul being present to prompt me. It would amaze you to hear the witticisms of my infant years, such as chopping off cat's tails, cropping the ears of kittens, fastening canisters to dogs, scattering pease upon stair-cases, defiling the bells of sober citizens, blowing out paper-lan-thorns, fastening watchmen in their boxes, cracking of lamps, *cum multis aliis*, too tedious to mention. You must know, gentlemen, it is faithfully recorded in the archives of our house, that before I was sixteen, I had carefully overset forty-seven cherry-barrows, led six-and-twenty blind men into kennels, tied eleven dead dogs to as many knockers, and thrown gunpowder into every old woman's charcoal-pan between *Whitechapel* and *Charing-cross*. My grand forte consisted in distributing penny-post letters for the benefit of the community, by which means I sent variety of his Majesty's liege subjects on sleeveless errands, and often made people, who were shy of good company, keep considerable levees. Once I remember I sent a man-midwife to a very good sort of an old gentlewoman of seventy-three, and ordered a

large parcel of child-bed linen to three superannuated vestals : by tying lines across the foot-way, I have in my time tripped up seventeen common-council men, staggering from venison-feasts, and fastened crackers to the tails of as many more. On Twelfth-day I used to tack more sinners together than a Fleet-parson, and was always very witty in sending to the *Amsterdam Fly* on *April* morning ; but, gentlemen, you may take my word for it, if you please, that it hath repented me sore for all these things ; but you know *nemo omnibus horis sapit* ; and every man, they tell you, is born to some province, so wit, sheer-wit, happened to be mine.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXII.

AS my education was pretty liberal, (egad! I believe you guess that) I had before I was seventeen gone clean through my accidence; could decline *musa & mensa*, & *nominativo hic lapis*, a stone, like a prince or parson. Indeed I began to be too much for my master; egad! gentlemen, I could say the three first lines of *quæ genus pat*; I could say *profodia est quæ rectum*; I could say *propria quæ maribus*; and, what is very remarkable, read the 10th chapter of *Nehemiah*: all this, and much more, I could do, which modesty forbids me to mention.

But, gentlemen, to proceed: from the time of my studies to my advancement in polite life, I was recommended by one of the trustees of the charity-school, that had the honour to educate me; I say, sirs, by his especial interest, and very cordial recommendation, I had an appointment to black shoes, clean knives, nurse the children, run of errands, and wait at table, in a merchant's house in the city; indeed, if my mistress had no commands for me, I was admitted into the counting-house, by way of distinction, to save, in time, the expence of a clerk. Well, gentlemen, would you believe it? that with all these advantages I took to bad courses, drank three pints of small
beer

beer a day, eat hearty because I was hungry, complained because I could not help it, and decamped in a fortnight without beat of drum. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

I wrote a fine hand, and understood something of accounts, so I determined to get into a counting-house, or do nothing; for you must know we gentlemen, who are educated at the public expence, have made a point, of late years, not to degrade our families by any dirty mechanic employment whatever; by which means we have the honour to subvert the good order of society, and to shut out from counting-houses all such presumptuous persons as are qualified at a great expence to fill them.

It was not long before I heard of an attorney who wanted an hackney-writer, and soon settled myself with him, to write sixteen hours out of the four-and-twenty, for the choice pay of ten shillings a week. I soon began to enter with spirit into my new situation; my fellow clerks were all gentlemen, and instructed me assiduously in what is called life; so that by the time I had been engaged a month, I drank and whored, and talked bawdry with the best of them. Indeed I did not dine often for fear of injuring my health, yet I soon procured a shirt with a ruffle at the sleeve of it, and figured away with a gold loop in my beaver; I was genteelly introduced to dirty-shirt coffee-house, and should have become a member of the swearing fraternity, if an unlucky accident had not blasted all my hopes of preferment,
and

and once more left me to the world. This was no other than my inadvertently speaking truth to a client, who was to have been kept in the dark, for which heaven, I hope, will forgive me. *Mortali fumus* is a trite proverb, and in more circumstances of my life than one I have found it so; but, gentlemen, in this world, *nec celeri, nec forte*, the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, or my sprightly genius had never been eclipsed as it has been.

After I had parted with my old master, the attorney, I soon began to sink into the shades; my drapery declined daily, and a constant negligent dishabille soon succeeded. My poor solitary ruffled shirt was reduced to a very plain one, and, by some means or other, the finery of my hat had deserted its station. However, first, my spirits never forsook me; I whistled over the funeral of my last six-pence, as merrily as ever, and whiffed my short pipe as gaily as I was wont to do. I should soon, however, have whistled at the other side of my mouth, if an acquaintance had not recommended me as an assistant to a school-master, a few miles out of town; I pledged the honour of a gentleman as a collateral security for a decent sort of coat with a friend, to make my first appearance, and was very soon settled in my new office.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXXIII.

BY enquiring the circumstances of the parents, I soon learned which were the brightest boys, and always observed, they promised to make the greatest men, whose friends invited me most frequently to dinner. My stipend was not quite equal to that of a prime minister, and rather inferior to a lord's of trade; but still it enabled me in time to recruit my wardrobe a little, and I soon arrived to such a pitch of gentility as to wear two clean shirts a week, and a japanned pair of pumps on *Sunday*: Indeed I employed my leisure hours in learning some wild notes on the violin, and in a short time acquitted myself so well as to pick up some money that way. I can sing a tolerable good song upon occasion, and was seldom absent when any merry-making was going forwards; so I soon began to cock my hat, and kiss the girls like a *Mahometan*. Here began a fresh trouble; but the fickle jade, Fortune, always loves to play her tricks on men in power, for you know,

Alti turris cadunt dum humiles casæ flant.

You shall hear, gentlemen, how soon my laurels withered in the dust, and all my glory faded. As I was saying, I began to play a few fool's tricks with the ladies; to be sure my person, as you perceive, was unexceptionable, and my talent
for

for flattery, in my opinion, the most bewitching of any man's I ever heard of. Then, first, I could write love-letters as fast as wild-fire; and lastly, to crown all my accomplishments, I wrote such a quantity of love odes, and pastoral elegies, about *Colin* and *Chloe*, as would have made you bless yourselves to have seen them: Yes, yes, I believe *Tom* has a pretty talent for these things, and do not love to bury it in a napkin: so you shall hear. The writing of these delicate compositions so wrought upon the finer fibres of my brain, that my mouth was continually full of swains and plains, rocks and flocks, hearts and darts, rivers and quivers; and I proposed to a very ingenious friend of mine, a barber of some eminence, to lead a pretty kind of pastoral life in the shades, and retire at once from the low commercial world together. Ah, how exquisitely did that line dwell upon my ear!

Tityre tu patula recubans sub tegmine fagi.

And I believe the scheme might have been practicable, but for an unlucky accident; a small deviation from some of the chaster rules of *Arcady*, which happened in the following manner.

You must know, beneath the same roof with this erroneous sinner dwelt a comely nymph, whose poetical appellation was *Lucinda*, but whose vulgar name was *Margery*. I had paid some little courtship to her, among the rest of the neighbours hand-maids, and by some means or other, whatever unlucky planet presided at that instant I cannot determine; but by some accident or other, I
missed

missed my way one even to bed, and unhappily strayed into that of Mrs. *Margery*. She, like a prudent virgin, began to cry out, but I assured her, if she bawled so loud, somebody would certainly hear her; so I even took possession of her blankets without further ceremony or preamble. But the cream of the joke is to come yet; for the same run of ill-fortune still pursuing me, by some accident or other, Mrs. *Margery* soon proved in a thriving condition; had the matter rested here we might have done well enough, but the jade began to make such a whining about the house, that I very prudently resolved to decamp as secretly as possible, and leave her to settle accounts with the parish; but, as the devil would have it, she got intelligence of my intention, so procured a warrant from a justice of peace to leave me in limbo, if I refused to meet her at the altar. This was a dreadful alternative, was it not? To starve in prison I thought was rather uncomfortable, and yet to get married was terrible to be thought of; so I even determined to observe a middle conduct, and laid my plot so deeply, that just as the man in black was going to ruin me, to all intents and purposes, I provided a pleasant little circumstance that suspended the ceremony to this hour, by taking myself out of the church; no faster than my legs would carry me, with three fat constables puffing at my heels, and almost as many spectators. We had a glorious chase of it, up hill and down hill, for near two miles, till I lost my fears, got the better of my followers, and I once more reached the city in safety.

C H A P. XXXIV.

AFTER my fright was subsided, I began to recollect myself a little, and found that all the wit of the expedition centered entirely in my heels; for upon putting my right-hand gingerly into my breeches-pocket, I produced from thence, in the current coin of these kingdoms, as much specie as amounted to two shillings and four-pence halfpenny. You may be sure this laughable circumstance tickled my fancy heartily. So I once more took to my private apartment, up four pair of stairs, in *St. Giles's*, in perfect good humour, and filling my short pipe, as usual, began to call a council, respecting my future plan of operations. I very luckily recollected that my mama was distantly related to a gentlewoman, who scoured pewter in a great man's family, was very intimate with the scullion, who knew something of the cook, who could speak to the house-maid, who *did* speak with the butler; and by pursuing this gradation of interest, I was soon exalted to the place of footman.

Here my post was perfectly lazy and agreeable. I spent the whole morning in cleaning my teeth, and washing my hands with almond-paste, powdering my hair, scenting my handkerchief, filling my snuff box, &c. My principal business was denying my master to tradesmen, who followed him
into

into the house; and levying taxes upon poor parsons, who were occasionally invited to dinner; and needy candidates for preferment, who constantly attended his levee. I took pious care to be as licentious and impudent as I was able, and by that means soon acquired the notice of the great man. My evenings were constantly spent in intrigues either at home or abroad, and I once more verified the proverb, that *omnia vincit amor*. A particular good correspondence subsisted between myself and my lady's woman, and as we had both a prodigious pretty sentimental capacity, we dedicated our leisure hours to the service of the muses, and produced I think in six months, by the supernatural fertility of our invention, upwards of twenty novels, fit for light summer's reading; and finished three acts of one of the compleatest comedies, I think, that was ever acted on any stage. It abounded with what we literary characters call the pathetic or affectuoso; and I am persuaded, if ever I have leisure to finish it, if it do not make a sentimental audience cry their bellies full, I am no judge of human nature.

But to return to my station. You may depend upon it, when I had arrived at the high road of preferment, I neglected no opportunity to advance myself, and therefore, in a very short time, by having my master's ear constantly to myself, and keeping other solicitors at a distance, I secured a considerable post under the government, or in other words, was appointed an officer in the excise, with a genteel salary of *forty pounds* per annum.

I should

I should have told you, gentlemen, that before this event took place, I was most violently in opposition, had expressed myself very satyrically against the minister, and written some smart things on the popular side of question, in the *Middlesex Journal*. I confess, it vexed me, to think of the many mistakes of government; but what could one public spirited individual do, towards bringing about a general reformation of manners? However, gentlemen, after railing so long against place-men, I no sooner found myself in a similar situation with the gentlemen of his Majesty's civil list, than it repented me of the severity of my censure; and I resolved to employ my future literary labours in defence of my brother pensioners, and the measures of government altogether.

Many were the spirited epistles I wrote, and great was the service I did the minister.

Respecting my place, I might have lived upon it genteelly enough, if it had not been for the expences of meat, drink, cloathing, washing, lodging, &c. but as it was, you know a gentleman must always appear to considerable advantage, in every department of life; and egad, sirs, I believe few people were more jealous of the dignity of the character, than your humble servant.

I was stationed in a market-town, about ten miles distance from the capital, and as nine out of ten of his Majesty's revenue officers were originally in my situation, I soon scraped acquaintance with several of my brother quill-drivers,
and

and particularly recommended myself to the surveyor of the district, who had formerly carried a flambeau in concert with a gentleman of my acquaintance. I began to consider myself at the *plus ultra*, as the saying is, of preferment and good fortune, when a most unlucky accident crushed all my golden views, and reduced me at once to a level with vulgar commoners.

You must know, gentlemen, a very honest good sort of man, who had paid *fifteen pence* in the pound to his creditors without any deduction, was obliged soon after to set up a four-wheel chaise, to take the air, and restore his constitution; and having taken a particular fancy to my politeness of behaviour, my talent for telling a good story, my vivacity, and many other uncommon qualifications, he gave me the liberty of riding out with him, as often as I thought proper. Well, sirs, whether the supervisor was jealous of the distinction paid me, or however it happened, I cannot say, but merely from the circumstance of riding in the good man's vehicle, I had the honour to be discharged from his Majesty's service, and the only plea alledged in defence of so unconstitutional a measure was, that a small quantity of lace, amounting to less than five hundred pounds, had been found in the seat of the carriage; and that some quantity of hyson tea, of about two tons, had been found in his private warehouse, and supposed to be conveyed there through the same channel.

C H A P. XXXV.

YOU will allow this, gentlemen, to have been a very comical circumstance, and I believe it kept me laughing three whole days and an half, without ceasing, upon the strength of it. Having nothing to do, I felt an *uncommon* felicity in the prospect of a future independence, and resolved to employ all the powers of my mind, to the advantage of society, by confining myself to literature altogether.

With this view, I collected a fine quantity of the choicest news-paper paragraphs by way of a sample; and applying myself to a periodical publisher, soon got engaged with him, on terms very highly to my advantage. The man knew pretty well what he was about; he knew I had a talent for the marvellous, and was seldom at a loss, when a blank corner wanted filling at any rate.

In that glorious station, great were my exploits, great were the achievements of this right hand, great was my character for universal knowledge. I made speeches for parliament-men to address their constituents; by putting a large piece of paper into a hat, I taught even aldermen to harangue upon the hustings. Patriots and politicians

ans grew eloquent from my wisdom, and my wit furnished matter of discourse for all the tea-tables in the town. By this right hand, assisted only by a grey-goose quill, I routed an army of thirty thousand Mahometans three times over. I stormed seven castles, and surprised garrisons innumerable. I sunk and dispersed vessels of all burdens, and manufactured hurricanes in the East-Indies, and earth-quakes at home. I made no scruple of marrying people who never saw each other, and killing such as never existed. I fought duels without number, and run several good sort of people through the body, without their knowing any thing of the matter. I made constantly the largest crops of corn, and the most terrible thunder storms, *that were ever remembered by the oldest man living.* I could make one potatoe produce ten bushels; and by my means barren women were often brought to-bed of three children, *who were all likely to do well.* I could sit me down in *St. Giles's*, and bring an express from the *Hague* one day to have the pleasure of contradicting it the second. I could divulge the private conferences of the cabinet-council, and make peace and war at pleasure. My wit, you must know had no mercy; I was guilty of *crim. con.* with lady dowagers, and committed more fornication than king *Solomon*.

All this, you may be sure, gave me vast weight with scientific men, they revered, in profound silence, those talents they could not comprehend. In this ingenious manner I lived a considerable time, with the strictest gentility. I darned my
own

own stockings, washed the sleeves and collar of an old shirt that was made me a present of, enjoyed my penny worth of purl over my half peck of small coal, and used to cogitate with my pipe and tobacco in great comfort. My finances grew so considerable at last, that I allowed myself two shavings a week, and actually paid off a milk score of three shillings and four pence, that had been outstanding a twelve-month.

Well, gentlemen, in that sweet calm of philosophic repose I might have dozed to this day, if nothing had happened to prevent me; but very unfortunately, in one of my witty paragraphs having tucked up a lady of fashion in bed with her footman; a red-hot Irishman, who swore it could be no body but his sister, threatened the printer with prosecution and persecution, if he did not give up the author to his vengeance.

Accordingly, gentlemen, while I was lost in the depths of the sweetest reverie that ever played upon the finer fibres of the fancy, this ill-bred fellow, without sending a card, paid an unexpected visit to my garret. It was in vain I told him, the paragraph in question was only a sprightly fally of my wit; the puppy knew no more about wit, than a cow does of a new shilling; and he obliged me to cut so many very sprightly capers, that I was heartily rejoiced, when he condescended to give me a sound kick on the breech, and led me politely by the nose down stairs: for, gentlemen, never having been regularly bred to this bastinading business, I was a little awkward under

under the manual discipline he bestowed upon me. But all this would not have interrupted my studies, if he very obligingly had not threatened a prosecution into the bargain. So, to be short, gentlemen, I was very soon after obliged to say once more to necessity, who you know is the mother of invention,

Eris mihi magnus Apollo.

C H A P. XXXVI.

I Could not help smiling at the devastation the rude savage had committed in my apartment, by flourishing his cane about my furniture. My poor broken chamber-pot, that was tied together with a piece of pack-thread, was totally demolished, and the contents spread abroad upon my best pig-tail-wig that lay by it on a chair. My sweet pastoral collection of flowers, that flourished in the window, was ruined beyond repair, together with a lively myrtle-tree that vegetated in a cracked gally-pot, and some curious sprigs of mint, that wantoned over my broken panes from some physical phials distributed in the compleatest order imaginable. I say, no man, with a spark of humour in his constitution, could help enjoying an uncommon sensation of delight, to have witnessed

witnessed to the general wreck, that was scattered around me.

The unexpected favour of the visit that had been paid me, and the compliments that ensued upon it, operated so powerfully on the susceptibility of my organs, that it was some little time before I could determine upon an expedient to supply the loss of my literary employment; however, the charming fertility of invention, which egad, seldom failed me in an emergency, determined me, without delay, to offer my service to the manager of one of the Theatres Royal: and as I could no longer inform the world by my pen, to instruct them in the art of oratory by my example.

I washed my face, and waited upon the great man in form; he received me with great courtesy, and condescended to be entertained with many strong specimens of my abilities. I went through the soliloquy of Hamlet with very great perfection: I put out the light, and that with wonderful propriety; and when I came in another part to—"Let every villain be called Posthumus Leonates," my voice was so audible, so musical, so distinct, and so clear, that a large body of people had collected themselves about the door, enquiring what mischief was going forwards within. So, gentlemen, after I had gone through my walk, trot, and gallop, the manager (who I observed, by the encomiums he passed upon me, was an accurate judge of good acting) lamented in very polite terms, that all the capital parts

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were engaged for the season; that the world abounded with so many great geniuses of my cast, it was impossible to provide for them all; and concluded by recommending me to study *mute* eloquence; and positively engaged to give me a shilling a night, every time I was wanted to march in solemn procession, and help to make up a crowd. My aspiring genius, gentlemen, soon began to shew itself again, and to emerge from mute oblivion; for I had not been employed a fortnight in the capacity just mentioned, before I undertook the crowing of the cock in Hamlet, and actually personated the hinder part of a dromedary, in Alexander's triumphant entry, before the conclusion of the season.

This, you may be sure, raised my reputation not a little; and as the summer season advanced, when small detachments of comedians were drafted off from the main body to all parts of the kingdom, I had the good fortune to be taken into the suite of one of the temporary managers, and to acquit myself in several eminent capacities, to the general satisfaction of the whole company. The lighting up the barn, and snuffing the candles, was part of my province; besides which, I prepared the thunder and lightening, and had the entire care of the clouds. I prompted upon occasion, and had once the honour to carry great news from *Verona* in person.

I might have done very well, and have got a second hand coat to my back by this time, if, as I told you before, the fickle goddesses did not take
such

such delight in persecuting great men. But, as it happened, I was discharged in direful disgrace, and left to take a fresh path in life, wherever I could find one. The occasion of my downfall was as follows: Being sent out for a quart of brandy hot for *Sigisnunda*, I unluckily mistook my message, and brought purl instead, that being my favourite liquor; which so enraged the lady, that she discharged the contents full in my face, and exasperated me to that degree, that I told her husband, I had seen something pass between *Tancred* and his spouse behind the scenes, that was not altogether agreeable to the rules of the piece, or the sentiments of the author. This was a sad thunderstroke to poor *Siffredi*, and if his rib had not found means to pacify him on the spot, the tragedy might have ended before the fifth act began. However, as the art of a woman never fails in an emergency of this nature, she easily softened the resentment of the cuckold, and drew down double vengeance on poor me; so that, by the assistance of a broomstick, they compelled me to make a precipitate retreat against all the laws of arms, and to congratulate myself on finding my bones in safety. Indeed, I considered such treatment a little too cavalier, for one gentleman to receive patiently from another; and entertained some thoughts of sending him an immediate challenge, and at the same time proposed applying to a constable, to be upon the spot to prevent our fighting: but fearing a mistake of orders might prove fatal, (as it did in a certain instance last war, that I have read of) I determined to drop all thoughts about vindicating the honour

of a gentleman for the present, and as it happened to be fair time in the town where I was quartered, I went immediately and offered my service to the master of a puppet-show, and agreed to spin ribbands with my mouth, and eat charcoal wrapt in tow, for whatever he would give me.

C H A P. XXXVII.

I Have told you I play tolerably on a fiddle, which was no small recommendation, and as I undertook to perform a solo on the salt-box, and eat hasty-pudding with a child's frock on, he made no scruple to take me into his service. There I led the most easy chearful life imaginable, following the cart with scenes and machinery in all hard weather, from one town to another, lying upon clean straw sometimes in snug barns, that let the wind in from all points of the compass, and sometimes deferring a night's sleep to a more convenient opportunity. My business was to play the wires behind the scenes, and to scrape most furiously on the fiddle when the glasses were balanced on the tobacco-pipe. I turned the sea briskly

briskly about, and pushed forward six sail of the line at the taking of *Cape Breton*, besides firing several small pieces of artillery behind the scenes. Well, first, if my master had kept shop open to this day, I dare answer for it, we had never parted; but a riot happening one night in the booth, owing to some young bucks, some choice spirits, being intoxicated with liquor, poor *Sally Salisbury* was basely violated, *Whittington* and his *Cat* demolished, the whole court of *King Pippin* totally ruined, the sea set on fire, and chaos seemed to have come again. My master, poor man! was forced to leave off trade, and your humble servant, having contracted a few decent debts, was forced to leave the country.

I was not, however, long at a loss for employment, being a kind of citizen of the world, or ubiquitarian; for having a small knowledge of my papa's business, I made an agreement with an honest barber, at a village about five miles off, to buckle spruce wigs, and take off the superfluities of the chin, on very moderate terms, and have lived very happily these six months in that situation; I enjoyed my joke and my song, my pipe and my brown bowl, and kept the customers in good humour while I twigg'd them by the nose; kissed my master's daughter, pleased my mistress, got a good name, and a strong recommendation to a friend of theirs in a town, to which place, gentlemen, I am going. If you will suffer me to treat you with a mug of beer at the next house, I will tell you something further respecting the situation of my family."

Bentley and *Fairfield* had looked alternately at each other, during the progress of *Tom's* story, at a loss to determine what to think of it; but as his good nature recompensed for many deficiencies, they readily agreed to attend him.

Bentley was particularly pleased with the more than stoical indifference with which he met the disappointments of the world, and congratulated him on a constitutional felicity few men enjoyed. "It seems, Mr. *Caxon*, said he, that the contentment of your own heart sets you superior to the outward attraction of circumstances, and I think you are that sort of man that could be merry in some degree, even in a prison-house, or a dungeon. The schools never taught you this, nor is it the consequence of any exertion of your reason; but it is more to you than much gold, and many smiles of fortune.

You will not be surprized when you are told, your story has been directed to young men, altogether unacquainted with the world; if we observe, you appear to have made many unwarrantable sacrifices to humour; and that we are as much at a loss to comprehend some of your meanings, as if they had been delivered to us in one of the dead languages.

I have been taught, sir, sincerity from my cradle, and will censure you, as a friend, for many improprieties you have repeated; but at the same time will do justice to the liberality of your education, and tell you, I conceive you have talents
might

might do you essential service, if rationally applied. I am no judge of Latin myself, but conceive, from the familiarity with which you quote it, you are a perfect master of that tongue.

You appear to have an ingenuity that might qualify you for better scenes, than any you have passed through, and a heart capable of accommodating itself to every situation; but, sir, you are strangely deficient, methinks, in sound policy, and, little as I know of the world, I think it is your own fault it has not used you better. A sober, rational, religious conduct, would have served you beyond all the little pleasantries you speak of; and though I am a mere lad, and a novice in the affairs of life, do let me advise you, as a friend, to consult yourself, and employ your abilities like a good scholar, and a good man."

G 4 C H A P.

CHAPTER *the last.*

MR. *Caxon* shook *Bentley* cordially by the hand, declared he was as honest, and as sensible a fellow of his years, as he had ever conversed with, and would certainly follow his advice when he could do no better; in the mean time, said he, as it may be a week or a fortnight before I begin this new trade of penitence and reformation, will you honour me, my worthy masters, with the small loan of a few shillings; for positively, though I have appeared so merry this morning, if you knew all, you would pity me. I am melancholy enough at heart, I do assure you, and with pretty good reason too; for to tell you the truth, my motive for going to town, at present, is this: "My sister was transported last week for picking of pockets; my poor brother will be certainly hanged for a highway-robbery, next *Wednesday*; my father is to be whipped to-morrow, at the cart's tail, for stealing of poultry; and my mother is dying in an hospital: Is there in creation a heart so callous, as to be insensible to such a story?"

The young men instinctively sought their pockets, and wiping away a tear, pressed each of them a bit of gold, in silence, upon Mr. *Caxon*.

Tom

Tom took the money with a solemn face, and seemed just about to put it into his pocket, when bursting into a loud laugh, he continued shaking his sides for many minutes, till recovering himself a little—"So you really, said he, thought I was in earnest, in all that state of family distress I laid before you. Egad, firs, if you attend to every tale of distress of this sort when you come to *London*, you will have enough to do, I can assure you. But to be serious for five minutes in my life, I will give you a lesson shall be worth something. In all your commerce with the great world, you must observe a degree of art, or you will never be on a footing with your neighbours; you have been educated in honesty and simplicity, and will, unless you keep a strict guard over yourselves, be constantly subject to the snares of the artful, and fallhoods of wicked men. I was prepossessed with your behaviour the moment I witnessed it, and determined to inform your generous ingenuity, that it was dangerous; your credulity, that it should not be trusted. I have adhered pretty faithfully to the different scenes of my life, but dwelt longer on some parts of the picture, than fair truth would admit of. I had a very friendly view in all this; first, to engage your credulity to the utmost, and then to correct it with candour. What appears to you to be learning, and a knowledge of languages, is superficial and contemptible in every view. The few scraps of *Latin*, with which I interlarded my narrative, may be collected from sign-posts and tomb-stones, and yet half the conversation of learned men amount to little more; therefore you will judge what

respect is due to such a display of language. Respecting what you conceive to be singularity of speech, it may lead you to guess something of the nature of that wit, for which some men value themselves with so little reason. I wish only to teach you, it is neither to be coveted or envied: and respecting the forgery about my friends, I meant only to determine how far your humane sensibilities would operate without your judgment, and to guard you against such insulting appeals to your passions, which you will be sure to meet with in the great world. Many are the tales of art you will meet with in *London*. And I intended nothing more than a burlesque upon those common insults to the understanding, which are constantly offered to the true sons of humanity. Here, gentlemen, take back your gold: I thank heaven, though I have but one fix-pence left in my pocket, I have a light heart to carry me through the world; and with all my comical tricks, I have not yet learned to impose upon the good-natured generosity of any. I fancy by this time the coach is ready, and as we have about a mile to walk, I will just light my pipe and attend you."

The young men pressed a trifle upon him, and after thanking him for his entertainment and instruction, parted from him at the inn, and proceeded, without any material occurrence, to the great city.

END OF VOL. I.